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SHAKSPEARE'S
DRAMATIC WORKS.

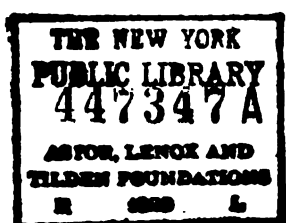
VOL. VII.

DRAMATIC WORKS
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE;
WITH
A LIFE OF THE POET,
AND
NOTES,
ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

VOL. VII.

BOSTON:
HILLIARD, GRAY, AND COMPANY.

1839.



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VOL. VII. 1

KING LEAR.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

THE story of King Lear and his Three Daughters was originally told by Geoffrey of Monmouth, from whom Holinshed transcribed it; and in his Chronicle, Shakspeare had certainly read it; but he seems to have been more indebted to the old anonymous play, entitled *The True Chronicle Hystorie of Leire, King of England, and his Three Daughters, Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordella*; 1605. A play with that title was entered on the Stationers' books by Edward White, May 14, 1594; and there are two other entries of the same piece, May 8, 1605, and Nov. 26, 1607. From the *Mirror of Magistrates*, Shakspeare has taken the hint for the behavior of the steward, and the reply of Cordelia to her father concerning her future marriage. The episode of Gloucester and his sons must have been borrowed from Sidney's *Arcadia*, no trace of it being found in the other sources of the fable. The reader will also find the story of King Lear in the second book and tenth canto of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, and in the fifteenth chapter of the third book of Warner's *Albion's England*. Camden, in his *Remaines*, under the head of *Wise Speeches*, tells a similar story to this of Lear, of Ina, king of the West Saxons; which, if the thing ever happened, probably was the real origin of the fable. The story has found its way into many ballads and other metrical pieces; one ballad will be found in Dr. Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, vol. i. 3d edit. The story is also to be found in the unpublished *Gesta Romanorum*, and in the Romance of *Perceforest*. The whole of this play could not have been written till after 1603. Harsnet's *Declaration of Popish Impostures*, to which it contains so many references, and from which the fantastic names of several spirits are

borrowed, was not published till that year. It must have been produced before the Christmas of 1606; for, in the entry of Lear on the Stationer's Register, on the 26th of November, 1607, it is expressly recorded to have been played, during the preceding Christmas, before his majesty at Whitehall. Malone places the date of the composition in 1605; I in 1604.

"Of this noble tragedy, one of the first productions of the noblest poets, it is scarcely possible to express our admiration in adequate terms. Whether considered as an effort of art, or as a picture of the passions, it is entitled to the highest praise. The two portions of which the fable consists, involving the fate of Lear and his daughters, and of Gloucester and his sons, influence each other in so many points, and are blended with such consummate skill, that whilst the imagination is delighted by diversity of circumstances, the judgment is equally gratified in viewing the mutual coöperation towards the final result; the coalescence being so intimate, as not only to preserve the necessary unity of action, but to constitute one of the greatest beauties of the piece.

"Such, indeed, is the interest excited by the structure and concatenation of the story, that the attention is not once suffered to flag. By rapid succession of incidents, by sudden and overwhelming vicissitudes, by the most awful instances of misery and destitution, by the bold contrariety of characters, are curiosity and anxiety kept progressively increasing, and with an impetus so strong as nearly to absorb every faculty of the mind and every feeling of the heart.

"Victims of frailty, of calamity, or of vice, in an age remote and barbarous, the actors in this drama are brought forward with a strength of coloring, which, had the scene been placed in a more civilized era, might have been justly deemed too dark and ferocious, but is not discordant with the earliest heathen age of Britain. The effect of this style of characterization is felt, occasionally, throughout the entire play; but it is particularly visible in the delineation of the vicious personages of the drama; the parts of Goneril, Regan, Edmund, and Cornwall, being loaded not only with ingratitude of the deepest dye, but with cruelty of the most savage and diabolical nature: they are the criminals, in fact, of an age where vice may be supposed to reign with lawless and gigantic power, and in which the extrusion of Gloucester's eyes might be such an event

not unfrequently occurred. Had this mode of casting his characters in the extreme, been applied to the remainder of the *dramatis personæ*, we should have lost some of the finest lessons of humanity and wisdom that ever issued from the pen of an uninspired writer ; but, with the exception of a few coarsenesses, which remind us of the barbarous period to which the story is referred, and of a few incidents rather revolting to credibility, but which could not be detached from the original narrative, the virtuous agents of the play exhibit the manners and the feelings of civilization, and are of that mixed fabric which can alone display a just portraiture of the nature and composition of our species.

“The characters of Cordelia and Edgar, it is true, approach nearly to perfection ; but the filial virtues of the former are combined with such exquisite tenderness of heart, and those of the latter, with such bitter humiliation and suffering, that grief, indignation, and pity, are instantly excited. Very striking representations are also given of the rough fidelity of Kent, and of the hasty credulity of Gloster ; but it is in delineating the passions, feelings, and afflictions of Lear, that our Poet has wrought up a picture of human misery which has never been surpassed, and which agitates the soul with the most overpowering emotions of sympathy and compassion.

“The conduct of the unhappy monarch having been founded merely on the impulses of sensibility, and not on any fixed principle or rule of action, no sooner has he discovered the baseness of those on whom he had relied, and the fatal mistake into which he had been hurried by the delusions of inordinate fondness and extravagant expectation, than he feels himself bereft of all consolation and resource. Those to whom he had given all, for whom he had stripped himself of dignity and power, and on whom he had centred every hope of comfort and repose in his old age, his inhuman daughters, having not only treated him with utter coldness and contempt, but sought to deprive him of all the respectability, and even of the very means of existence,—what, in a mind so constituted as Lear’s, the sport of intense and ill-regulated feeling, and tortured by the reflection of having deserted the only child who loved him, what but madness could be expected as the result ? It was, in fact, the necessary consequence of the reciprocal action of complicated distress and morbid sensibility ; and, in describing the approach of this dreadful infliction, in

tracing its progress, its height, and subsidence, our Poet has displayed such an intimate knowledge of the workings of the human intellect, under all its aberrations, as would afford an admirable study for the inquirer into mental physiology. He has, also, in this play, as in that of Hamlet, finely discriminated between real and assumed insanity; Edgar, amidst all the wild imagery which his imagination has accumulated, never touching on the true source of his misery; whilst Lear, on the contrary, finds it associated with every object and every thought, however distant or dissimilar. Not even the Orestes of Euripides, or the Clementina of Richardson, can, as pictures of disordered reason, be placed in competition with this of Lear; it may be pronounced, indeed, from its truth and completeness, beyond the reach of rivalry.*

An anonymous writer, who has instituted a comparison between the Lear of Shakspeare and the *Oedipus* of Sophocles, and justly given the palm to the former, closes his essay with the following sentence, to which every reader of taste and feeling will subscribe:—"There is no detached character in Shakspeare's writings which displays so vividly as this the hand and mind of a master; which exhibits so great a variety of excellence, and such amazing powers of delineation; so intimate a knowledge of the human heart, with such exact skill in tracing the progress and the effects of its more violent and more delicate passions. It is in the management of this character, more especially, that he fills up that grand idea of a perfect poet, which we delight to image to ourselves, but despair of seeing realized."†

In the same work from whence this is extracted, will be found an article, entitled "*Theatralia*," attributed to the pen of Mr. Charles Lamb, in which are the following striking animadversions on the liberty taken in changing the catastrophe of this tragedy in representation:—"The Lear of Shakspeare cannot be acted. The contemptible machinery with which they mimic the storm he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horrors of the real elements, than any actor can be to represent Lear. The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual: the explosions of his passions are terrible as a volcano; they are storms turning up, and disclosing to the bottom, that rich sea, his

* Drake's *Shakspeare and his Times*, vol. II. p. 460.

† *The Reflector*, vol. II. p. 139, on Greek and English Tragedy.

mind, with all its vast riches: it is his mind which is laid bare. This case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on; even as he himself neglects it. On the stage, we see nothing but corporal infirmities and weakness, the impotence of age; while we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear,—we are in his mind; we are sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of his daughters and storms; in the aberrations of his reason, we discover a mighty, irregular power of reasoning, unmethodized from the ordinary purposes of life, but exerting its powers, as the wind blows where it listeth, at will on the corruptions and abuses of mankind. What have looks or tones to do with that sublime identification of his age with that of *the heavens themselves*, when, in his reproaches to them for conniving at the injustice of his children, he reminds them that ‘they themselves are old!’ What gesture shall we appropriate to this? What has voice or the eye to do with such things? But the play is beyond all art, as the tamperings with it show; it is too hard and stony; it must have love-scenes, and a happy ending. It is not enough that Cordelia is a daughter, she must shine as a lover too. Fate has put his hook in the nostrils of this leviathan, for Garrick and his followers, the showmen of the scene, to draw it about more easily. A happy ending!—as if the living martyrdom that Lear had gone through, the flaying of his feelings alive, did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorous thing for him. If he is to live and be happy after, if he could sustain this world’s burden after, why all this pudder and preparation? why torment us with all this unnecessary sympathy?—as if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station,—as if, at his years, and with his experience, any thing was left but to die.”

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

LEAR, *King of Britain.*
 King of France.
 Duke of Burgundy.
 Duke of Cornwall.
 Duke of Albany.
 Earl of Kent.
 Earl of Gloster.
 EDGAR, *Son to Gloster.*
 EDMUND, *Bastard Son to Gloster.*
 CURAN, *a Courtier.*
 Old Man, *Tenant to Gloster.*
 Physician. Fool.
 OSWALD, *Steward to Goneril.*
 An Officer, *employed by Edmund.*
 Gentleman, *Attendant on Cordelia.*
 A Herald.
 Servants to Cornwall.

GONERIL, }
 REGAN, } *Daughters to Lear.*
 CORDELIA, }

Knights *attending on the King*, Officers, Messengers,
 Soldiers, and Attendants.

SCENE. Britain.

KING LEAR.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A Room of State in King Lear's Palace.*

Enter KENT, GLOSTER, and EDMUND.

Kent. I THOUGHT the king had more affected the duke of Albany, than Cornwall.

Glo. It did always seem so to us; but now, in the division of the kingdom,¹ it appears not which of the dukes he values most; for equalities are so weighed, that curiosity² in neither can make choice of either's moiety.³

Kent. Is not this your son, my lord?

Glo. His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge. I have so often blushed to acknowledge him, that now I am brazed to it.

Kent. I cannot conceive you.

Glo. Sir, this young fellow's mother could: whereupon she grew round-wombed; and had, indeed, sir, a son for her cradle, ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault?

¹ There is something of obscurity or inaccuracy in this preparatory scene. The king has already divided his kingdom, and yet, when he enters, he examines his daughters to discover in what proportions he should divide it. Perhaps Kent and Gloster only were privy to his design, which he still kept in his own hands, to be changed or performed as subsequent reasons should determine him.

² *Curiosity* is scrupulous exactness.

³ *Moiety* is used by Shakspeare for part or portion.

Kent. I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.¹

Glo. But I have, sir, a son by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account. Though this knave came somewhat saucily into the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair; there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged.—Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

Edm. No, my lord.

Glo. My lord of Kent. Remember him hereafter as my honorable friend.

Edm. My services to your lordship.

Kent. I must love you, and sue to know you better.

Edm. Sir, I shall study deserving.

Glo. He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again.—The king is coming.

[*Trumpets sound within.*]

Enter LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA, and Attendants.

Lear. Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloster.

Glo. I shall, my liege.

[*Exeunt* GLOSTER and EDMUND.]

Lear. Mean time we shall express our darker² purpose.

Give me the map there.—Know that we have divided
In three our kingdom; and 'tis our fast intent³
To shake all cares and business from our age;
Conferring⁴ them on younger strengths, while we,
Unburdened, crawl toward death.—Our son of Cornwall,

And you, our no less loving son of Albany,

¹ *Proper* is comely, handsome.

² i. e. more secret.—The sense is, "We have already made known our desire of parting the kingdom. We will now discover the reasons by which we shall regulate the partition."

³ i. e. our determined resolution. The quartos read "*first* intent."

⁴ The quartos read *confirming*.

We have this hour a constant will¹ to publish
 Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
 May be prevented now. The princes, France and
 Burgundy,
 Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
 Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,
 And here are to be answered.—Tell me, my daughters,
 (Since now we will divest us, both of rule,
 Interest of territory, cares of state,²)
 Which of you, shall we say, doth love us most?
 That we our largest bounty may extend
 Where merit doth most challenge it.—Goneril,
 Our eldest-born, speak first.

Gon.

Sir, I

Do love you more than words can wield the matter,
 Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty;
 Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;
 No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honor;
 As much as child e'er loved, or father found.
 A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable;
 Beyond all manner of so much I love you.³

Cor. What shall Cordelia do? Love, and be silent.

[*Aside.*

Lear. Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
 With shadowy forests and with champains riched,⁴
 With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,
 We make thee lady. To thine and Albany's issue
 Be this perpetual.—What says our second daughter,
 Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.

Reg. I am made of that self metal as my sister,
 And prize me at her worth.⁵ In my true heart

¹ A firm, determined will. The lines from *while we* to *prevented now* are omitted in the quartos.

² The two lines in a parenthesis are omitted in the quartos.

³ "Beyond all assignable quantity. I love you beyond limits, and cannot say it is *so much*; for how much soever I should name, it would yet be more."

⁴ i. e. *enriched*. So Drant in his translation of Horace's *Epistles*, 1567:—

"To *ritch* his country, let his words lyke flowing water fall."

⁵ That is, "*estimate me at her value*; my love has at least equal claim to your favor. Only she comes short of *me in this*, that I profess myself

I find, she names my very deed of love ;
 Only she comes too short,—that I profess
 Myself an enemy to all other joys,
 Which the most precious square of sense possesses ;
 And find I am alone felicitate
 In your dear highness' love.

Cor. Then poor Cordelia ! [*Aside.*
 And yet not so ; since, I am sure, my love's
 More richer than my tongue.

Lear. To thee, and thine, hereditary ever,
 Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom ;
 No less in space, validity,¹ and pleasure,
 Than that conferred² on Goneril.—Now, our joy,
 Although the last, not least ; to whose young love
 The vines of France, and milk of Burgundy,
 Strive to be interested :³ what can you say, to draw
 A third more opulent than your sisters ? Speak.

Cor. Nothing, my lord.

Lear. Nothing ?

Cor. Nothing.

Lear. Nothing can come of nothing ; speak again.

Cor. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
 My heart into my mouth. I love your majesty
 According to my bond ; nor more, nor less.

Lear. How, how, Cordelia ? mend your speech a
 little,
 Lest it may mar your fortunes.

Cor. Good my lord,
 You have begot me, bred me, loved me ; I
 Return those duties back as are right fit,

an enemy to all other joys which the most precious aggregation of sense
 can bestow." *Square* is here used for the *whole complement*, as *circle* is
 now sometimes used.

¹ *Validity* is several times used to signify *worth*, *value*, by Shakspeare.
 It does not, however, appear to have been peculiar to him in this sense.

² The folio reads *conferred* ; the quartos, *confirmed*. So in a former
 passage we have in the quartos *confirming* for *conferring*. The word
confirm might be used in this connection in a legal sense, as it is in instru-
 ments of conveyance.

³ To *interest* and to *interesse* are not, perhaps, different spellings of the
 same verb, but two distinct words, though of the same import. We
 have *interested* in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*. Drayton also uses the word in
 the Preface to his *Polyolbion*.

Obey you, love you, and most honor you.
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say,
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord, whose hand must take my plight, shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care, and duty.
Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.

Lear. But goes this with thy heart?

Cor. Ay, good my lord.

Lear. So young, and so untender?

Cor. So young, my lord, and true.

Lear. Let it be so,—thy truth then be thy dower;
For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,
The mysteries of Hecate, and the night;
By all the operations of the orbs,
From whom we do exist, and cease to be;
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
Propinquity and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart and me
Hold thee, from this, forever. The barbarous Scythian,
Or he that makes his generation¹ messes
To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
Be as well neighbored, pitied, and relieved,
As thou my sometime daughter.

Kent. Good my liege,—

Lear. Peace, Kent!

Come not between the dragon and his wrath.
I loved her most, and thought to set my rest
On her kind nursery.—Hence, and avoid my sight!

[To CORDELIA.]

So be my grave my peace, as here I give
Her father's heart from her!—Call France;—who stirs?
Call Burgundy.—Cornwall, and Albany,
With my two daughters' dowers digest this third;
Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.
I do invest you jointly with my power,
Preëminence, and all the large effects
That troop with majesty.—Ourself, by monthly course,
With reservation of a hundred knights,

¹ His children.

By you to be sustained, shall our abode
 Make with you by due turns. Only we still retain¹
 The name, and all the additions² to a king;
 The sway,
 Revenue, execution of the rest,³
 Beloved sons, be yours; which to confirm,
 This coronet part between you. [*Giving the crown.*]

Kent. Royal Lear,
 Whom I have ever honored as my king,
 Loved as my father, as my master followed,
 As my great patron thought on in my prayers,—

Lear. The bow is bent and drawn; make from the
 shaft.

Kent. Let it fall rather, though the fork invade
 The region of my heart; be Kent unmannerly,
 When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old
 man?

Think'st thou, that duty shall have dread to speak,
 When power to flattery bows? To plainness honor's
 bound,

When majesty stoops to folly. Reverse thy doom;⁴
 And, in thy best consideration, check
 This hideous rashness. Answer my life my judgment,
 Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least;
 Nor are those empty-hearted, whose low sound
 Reverbs⁵ no hollowness.

Lear. Kent, on thy life, no more.

Kent. My life I never held but as a pawn
 To wage against thine enemies,⁶ nor fear to lose it,
 Thy safety being the motive.

Lear. Out of my sight!

¹ Thus the quarto; folio, "we shall retain."

² "All the titles belonging to a king."

³ By "the execution of the rest," all the other functions of the kingly office are probably meant.

⁴ The folio reads, "reserve thy state;" and has *falls* instead of "stoops to folly."

⁵ This is, perhaps, a word of the Poet's own; meaning the same as *reverberates*.

⁶ The expression to *wage against* is used in a letter from Guil. Webbe to Robt. Wilmot, prefixed to *Tancred and Gismund*, 1592:—"You shall not be able to *wage against* me in the charges growing upon this action."

Kent. See better, Lear, and let me still remain
The true blank ¹ of thine eye.

Lear. Now, by Apollo,——

Kent. Now, by Apollo, king,
Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.

Lear. O vassal ! miscreant !
[*Laying his hand on his sword.*

Alb. Corn. Dear sir, forbear.

Kent. Do ;
Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow
Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy gift,
Or, whilst I can vent clamor from my throat,
I'll tell thee, thou dost evil.

Lear. Hear me, recreant !
On thine allegiance, hear me !—
Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow,
(Which we durst never yet,) and, with strained pride,
To come betwixt our sentence and our power,
(Which nor our nature nor our place can bear ;)
Our potency made ² good, take thy reward.
Five days we do allot thee, for provision
To shield thee from diseases ³ of the world ;
And, on the sixth, to turn thy hated back
Upon our kingdom. If, on the tenth day following,
Thy banished trunk be found in our dominions,
The moment is thy death. Away ! By Jupiter,
This shall not be revoked.

Kent. Fare thee well, king ; since thus thou wilt
appear,

Freedom ⁴ lives hence, and banishment is here.

The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid,

[*To CORDELIA.*

That justly think'st, and hast most rightly said !—

And your large speeches may your deeds approve,

[*To REGAN and GONERIL.*

¹ The *blank* is the *mark* at which men shoot.

² "They to whom I have surrendered my authority, yielding me the ability to dispense it in this instance." Quarto B. reads "*make good*."

³ Thus the quartos. The folio reads "*disasters*." By *diseases* are meant *uneasinesses, inconveniences*.

⁴ The quartos read "*Friendship* ;" and in the next line, instead of "*dear shelter*," "*protection*."

That good effects may spring from words of love.—
 Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu ;
 He'll shape his old course in a country new. [Exit.

Re-enter GLOSTER, *with* FRANCE, BURGUNDY, *and*
 Attendants.

Glo. Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.

Lear. My lord of Burgundy,
 We first address towards you, who with this king
 Hath rivalled for our daughter. What, in the least,
 Will you require in present dower with her,
 Or cease your quest of love ?¹

Bur. Most royal majesty,
 I crave no more than hath your highness offered,
 Nor will you tender less.

Lear. Right noble Burgundy,
 When she was dear to us, we did hold her so ;
 But now her price is fallen. Sir, there she stands ;
 If aught within that little, seeming² substance,
 Or all of it, with our displeasure pieced,
 And nothing more, may fitly like your grace,
 She's there, and she is yours.

Bur. I know no answer.

Lear. Sir,
 Will you, with those infirmities she owes,³
 Unfriended, new-adopted to our hate,
 Dowered with our curse, and strangered with our oath,
 Take her, or leave her ?

Bur. Pardon me, royal sir ;
 Election makes not up⁴ on such conditions.

Lear. Then leave her, sir ; for, by the power that
 made me,
 I tell you all her wealth.—For you, great king,
 [To FRANCE.

¹ A *quest* is a *seeking* or *pursuit* : the expedition in which a knight was engaged is often so named in the *Faerie Queen*.

² *Seeming* here means *specious*.

³ i. e. *owns*.

⁴ That is, I cannot decide to take her upon such terms ; or, such conditions leave me no choice.

I would not from your love make such a stray,
To match you where I hate ; therefore beseech you
To avert your liking a more worthier way,
Than on a wretch whom nature is ashamed
Almost to acknowledge hers.

France.

This is most strange !

That she, that even but now was your best object,
The argument of your praise, balm of your age,
Most best, most dearest, should in this trice of time
Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle
So many folds of favor ! Sure, her offence
Must be of such unnatural degree,
That monsters it,¹ or your fore-vouched affection
Fall into taint ;² which to believe of her,
Must be a faith, that reason without miracle
Could never plant in me.

Cor.

I yet beseech your majesty,

(If for³ I want that glib and oily art,
To speak and purpose not ; since what I well intend,
I'll do't before I speak,) that you make known
It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,
No unchaste⁴ action, or dishonored step,
That hath deprived me of your grace and favor ;
But even for want of that, for which I am richer ;
A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
That I am glad I have not, though not to have it,
Hath lost me in your liking.

Lear.

Better thou

Hadst not been born, than not to have pleased me better.

France. Is it but this ? a tardiness in nature,
Which often leaves the history unspoke,
That it intends to do ?—My lord of Burgundy,
What say you to the lady ? Love is not love,

¹ In the phraseology of Shakspeare's age, *that* and *as* were convertible words. The uncommon verb *to monster* occurs again in *Coriolanus*.

² The former affection which you professed for her must become the subject of reproach. *Taint* is here an abbreviation of *attaint*.

³ i. e. "if cause I want," &c.

⁴ The quartos read, "no unclean action."

When it is mingled with respects,¹ that stand
Aloof from the entire point. Will you have her?
She is herself a dowry.

Bur. Royal Lear,
Give but that portion which yourself proposed,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Duchess of Burgundy.

Lear. Nothing. I have sworn; I am firm.

Bur. I am sorry, then, you have so lost a father,
That you must lose a husband.

Cor. Peace be with Burgundy!
Since that respects of fortune are his love,
I shall not be his wife.

France. Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being
poor;
Most choice, forsaken; and most loved, despised!
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon;
Be it lawful, I take up what's cast away.
Gods, gods! 'tis strange, that from their cold'st neglect,
My love should kindle to inflamed respect.—
Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my chance,
Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France;
Not all the dukes of waterish Burgundy
Shall buy this unprized precious maid of me.—
Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind;
Thou lovest here, a better where² to find.

Lear. Thou hast her, France. Let her be thine; for
we
Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see
That face of hers again.—Therefore be gone,
Without our grace, our love, our benison.—
Come, noble Burgundy.

[*Flourish.* *Exeunt* LEAR, BURGUNDY, CORNWALL,
ALBANY, GLOSTER, and Attendants.]

France. Bid farewell to your sisters.

Cor. The jewels of our father, with washed eyes
Cordelia leaves you; I know you what you are;

¹ i. e. with cautious and prudential considerations.—The folio has
regards.

² *Here* and *where* have the power of nouns.

And, like a sister, am most loath to call
Your faults, as they are named. Use well our father ;
To your professed¹ bosoms I commit him.
But yet, alas ! stood I within his grace,
I would prefer him to a better place.
So farewell to you both.

Gon. Prescribe not us our duties.

Reg. Let your study
Be, to content your lord ; who hath received you
At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted,
And well are worth the want that you have wanted.²

Cor. Time shall unfold what plaited³ cunning hides ;
Who cover faults,⁴ at last shame them derides.
Well may you prosper !

France. Come, my fair Cordelia.

[*Exeunt FRANCE and CORDELIA.*]

Gon. Sister, it is not a little I have to say, of what
most nearly appertains to us both. I think our father
will hence to-night.

Reg. That's most certain, and with you ; next month
with us.

Gon. You see how full of changes his age is ; the
observation we have made of it hath not been little.
He always loved our sister most ; and with what poor
judgment he hath now cast her off, appears too grossly.

Reg. 'Tis the infirmity of his age ; yet he hath ever
but slenderly known himself.

¹ We have here *professed* for *professing*. It has been elsewhere observed that Shakspeare often uses one participle for another.

² Thus the folio. The quartos read :—

“ And well are worth the *worth* that you have wanted.”

The meaning of the passage, as it now stands in the text, is, “ You well deserve to want that dower, which you have lost by having failed in your obedience.”

³ That is, *complicated, intricate, involved*, cunning.

⁴ The quartos read :—

“ Who *covers* faults, at last *shame them* derides.”

The folio has :—

“ Who *covers* faults, at last *with shame* derides.”

Mason proposed to read :—

“ Who *covert* faults, at last with shame derides.”

The word *who* referring to *Time*.

Gon. The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash ; then must we look to receive from his age, not alone the imperfections of long-engrafted condition,¹ but therewithal, the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them.

Reg. Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him, as this of Kent's banishment.

Gon. There is further compliment of leave-taking between France and him. 'Pray you, let us hit together. If our father carry authority with such dispositions as he bears, this last surrender of his will but offend us.

Reg. We shall further think of it.

Gon. We must do something, and i'the heat.²

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A Hall in the Earl of Gloster's Castle.*

Enter EDMUND, with a letter.

Edm. Thou, nature, art my goddess ;³ to thy law My services are bound. Wherefore should I Stand in the plague⁴ of custom ; and permit The curiosity⁵ of nations to deprive⁶ me, For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines Lag of a brother ? Why bastard ? wherefore base ? When my dimensions are as well compact, My mind as generous, and my shape as true, As honest madam's issue ? Why brand they us With base ? with baseness ? bastardy ? base, base ? Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take More composition and fierce quality, Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,

¹ i. e. *temper* ; *qualities* of mind confirmed by long habit.

² *We must strike while the iron's hot.*

³ Edmund calls *nature* his goddess, for the same reason as we call a bastard a natural son.

⁴ "Wherefore should I submit tamely to the plague (i. e. the evil) or injustice of custom ?"

⁵ The *nicety* of civil institutions, their *strictness* and *scrupulosity*.

⁶ To *deprive* is equivalent to *disinherit*. Holinshed speaks of the line of Henry before *deprived*.

Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,
 Got 'tween asleep and wake?—Well, then,
 Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land.
 Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund,
 As to the legitimate; fine word,—*legitimate!*
 Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
 And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
 Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper.
 Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

Enter GLOSTER.

Glo. Kent banished thus! and France in choler
 parted!
 And the king gone to-night! subscribed¹ his power!
 Confined to exhibition!² All this done
 Upon the gad!³—Edmund! how now? what
 news?

Edm. So please your lordship, none.

[*Putting up the letter.*

Glo. Why so earnestly seek you to put up that
 letter?

Edm. I know no news, my lord.

Glo. What paper were you reading?

Edm. Nothing, my lord.

Glo. No? What needed then that terrible despatch
 of it into your pocket? The quality of nothing hath
 not such need to hide itself. Let's see. Come, if it
 be nothing, I shall not need spectacles.

Edm. I beseech you, sir, pardon me. It is a letter
 from my brother, that I have not all o'erread; for so
 much as I have perused, I find it not fit for your over-
 looking.

Glo. Give me the letter, sir.

¹ To *subscribe* is to *yield*, to *surrender*.

² *Exhibition* is an *allowance*, a *stipend*.

³ i. e. in *haste*, equivalent to *upon the spur*. A *gad* was a sharp-pointed
 piece of steel, used as a spur to urge cattle forward; whence *goaded* for-
 ward. Mr. Nares suggests, that to *gad* and *gadding*, originate from being
 on the spur to go about.

Edm. I shall offend, either to detain or give it. The contents, as in part I understand them, are to blame.

Glo. Let's see, let's see.

Edm. I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote this but as an essay¹ or taste of my virtue.

Glo. [Reads.] *This policy, and reverence of age, makes the world bitter to the best of our times; keeps our fortunes from us, till our oldness cannot relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond² bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny; who sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffered. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue forever, and live the beloved of your brother, Edgar!—Humph—Conspiracy!—Sleep till I waked him—you should enjoy half his revenue,—my son Edgar!—Had he a hand to write this? a heart and brain to breed it in?—When came this to you? Who brought it?*

Edm. It was not brought me, my lord, there's the cunning of it; I found it thrown in at the casement of my closet.

Glo. You know the character to be your brother's?

Edm. If the matter were good, my lord, I durst swear it were his; but, in respect of that, I would fain think it were not.

Glo. It is his.

Edm. It is his hand, my lord; but, I hope, his heart is not in the contents.

Glo. Hath he never heretofore sounded you in this business?

Edm. Never, my lord; but I have often heard him maintain it to be fit, that, sons at perfect age, and fathers declining, the father should be as ward to the son, and the son manage his revenue.

Glo. O villain, villain!—His very opinion in the letter!—Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested, brutish villain! worse than brutish!—Go, sirrah, seek him;

¹ "As an *essay*," &c. means as a *trial* or taste of my virtue. "To *assay*, or rather *essay*, of the French word *essayer*," says Baret.

² I. e. *weak* and *foolish*.

I'll apprehend him.—Abominable villain!—Where is he?

Edm. I do not well know, my lord. If it shall please ye to suspend your indignation against my brother, till you can derive from him better testimony of his intent, you shall run a certain course; where,¹ if you violently proceed against him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great gap in your own honor, and shake in pieces the heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life for him, that he hath writ this to feel my affection to your honor,² and to no other pretence³ of danger.

Glo. Think you so?

Edm. If your honor judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, and by an auricular assurance have your satisfaction; and that without any further delay than this very evening.

Glo. He cannot be such a monster.

[*Edm.* Nor is not, sure.

Glo. To his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him.—Heaven and earth! '—Edmund, seek him out; wind me into him,⁵ I pray you; frame the business after your own wisdom; I would unstate myself, to be in a due resolution.⁶

Edm. I will seek him, sir, presently; convey⁷ the business as I shall find means, and acquaint you withal.

Glo. These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us. Though the wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects.⁸ Love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide; in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond

¹ *Where* for *whereas*.

² The usual address to a lord.

³ i. e. design or purpose.

⁴ The words between brackets are omitted in the folio.

⁵ "Wind me into him." Another example of familiar expressive phraseology not unfrequent in Shakspeare.

⁶ "I would give all that I am possessed of, to be satisfied of the truth."

⁷ To convey is to conduct, or carry through.

⁸ That is, though natural philosophy can give account of eclipses, yet we feel their consequences.

cracked between son and father. [This villain of mine comes under the prediction; there's son against father. The king falls from bias of nature; there's father against child. We have seen the best of our time; machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders, follow us disquietly to our graves!']—Find out this villain, Edmund, it shall lose thee nothing; do it carefully.—And the noble and true-hearted Kent banished! his offence, honesty!—Strange! strange!

[Exit.]

Edm. This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune, (often the surfeit of our own behavior,) we make guilty of our disasters, the sun, the moon, and the stars; as if we were villains by necessity; fools, by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers² by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail; and my nativity was under *ursa major*; so that it follows I am rough and lecherous.—Tut, I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing. Edgar——

Enter EDGAR.

and pat he comes, like the catastrophe of the old comedy. My cue is villanous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o'Bedlam.—O, these eclipses do portend these divisions! Fa, sol, la, mi.³

¹ All between brackets is omitted in the quartos.

² *Treachers* is the reading of the folio. Chaucer, in his *Romaunt of the Rose*, mentions "the false *treacher*;" and Spenser many times uses the same epithet. The quartos all read *treacherers*.

³ Shakspeare shows, by the context, that he was well acquainted with the property of these syllables in solmization, which imply a series of sounds so unnatural that ancient musicians prohibited their use. The monkish writers on music say *mi contra fa, est diabolus*: the interval

Edg. How now, brother Edmund? What serious contemplation are you in?

Edm. I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses.

Edg. Do you busy yourself with that?

Edm. I promise you,¹ the effects he writes of, succeed unhappily: [as of unnaturalness between the child and the parent; death, dearth, dissolutions of ancient amities; divisions in state, menaces and maledictions against king and nobles; needless diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of cohorts,² nuptial breaches, and I know not what.

Edg. How long have you been a sectary astronomical?

Edm. Come, come;] when saw you my father last?

Edg. Why, the night gone by.

Edm. Spake you with him?

Edg. Ay, two hours together.

Edm. Parted you in good terms? Found you no displeasure in him, by word or countenance?

Edg. None at all.

Edm. Bethink yourself, wherein you may have offended him; and at my entreaty, forbear his presence, till some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure; which at this instant so rageth in him, that with the mischief of your person it would scarcely allay.

Edg. Some villain hath done me wrong.

Edm. That's my fear. [I pray you, have a content³ forbearance, till the speed of his rage goes slower; and, as I say, retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my lord

fa mi including a *tritonus* or sharp fourth, consisting of three tones without the intervention of a semi-tone, expressed in the modern scale by the letters F G A B, would form a musical phrase extremely disagreeable to the ear. Edmund, speaking of eclipses as portents and prodigies, compares the dislocation of events, the *times being out of joint*, to the unnatural and offensive sounds *fa sol la mi*.—*Dr. Burney*.

¹ The folio edition commonly differs from the first quarto, by augmentations or insertions; but in this place, it varies by the omission of all between brackets.

² For *cohorts* some editors read *courts*.

³ i. e. *temperate*. All between brackets is omitted in the quartos.

Edg. speak. Pray you, go ; there's my key.—If you do stir abroad, go armed.

Edg. Armed, brother ?]

Edm. Brother, I advise you to the best ; go armed. I am no honest man, if there be any good meaning towards you. I have told you what I have seen and heard, but faintly ; nothing like the image and horror of it. 'Pray you, away.

Edg. Shall I hear from you anon ?

Edm. I do serve you in this business.—

[*Exit* EDGAR.]

A credulous father, and a brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms,
That he suspects none ; on whose foolish honesty
My practices ride easy !—I see the business.—
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit ;
All with me's meet, that I can fashion fit.

[*Exit*.]

SCENE III. *A Room in the Duke of Albany's Palace.*

Enter GONERIL and Steward.

Gon. Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding of his fool ?

Stew. Ay, madam.

Gon. By day and night he wrongs me ; every hour
He flashes into one gross crime or other,
That sets us all at odds. I'll not endure it ;
His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us
On every trifle.—When he returns from hunting,
I will not speak with him : say, I am sick.—
If you come slack of former services,
You shall do well ; the fault of it I'll answer.

Stew. He's coming, madam ; I hear him.

[*Horns within.*]

Gon. Put on what weary negligence you please,
You and your fellows ; I'd have it come to question.
If he dislike it, let him to my sister,

Whose mind and mine, I know, in that are one,
 [Not to be overruled. Idle old man,¹
 That still would manage those authorities,
 That he hath given away!—Now, by my life,
 Old fools are babes again; and must be used
 With checks, as flatteries,—when they are seen
 abused.²]

Remember what I have said.

Stew.

Very well, madam.

Gon. And let his knights have colder looks among
 you;

What grows of it, no matter; advise your fellows so.

[I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall,
 That I may speak.³—I'll write straight to my sister,
 To hold my very course.—Prepare for dinner.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *A Hall in the same.*

Enter KENT, disguised.

Kent. If but as well I other accents borrow,
 That can my speech diffuse,⁴ my good intent
 May carry through itself to that full issue
 For which I razed⁵ my likeness.—Now, banished Kent,
 If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemned,
 (So may it come!) thy master, whom thou lov'st,
 Shall find thee full of labors.

¹ This line and the four following are not in the folio. Theobald observes, that they are fine in themselves, and much in character for Goneril.

² The meaning of this passage may be, "Old men are babes again, and must be accustomed to checks as well as flatteries, especially when the latter are seen to be abused by them."

³ The words in brackets are found in the quartos, but omitted in the folio.

⁴ To *diffuse* here means to *disguise*, to render it *strange*, to *obscure* it. See *Merry Wives of Windsor*. We must suppose that Kent advances looking on his disguise.

⁵ i. e. effaced.

Horns within. Enter LEAR, Knights, and Attendants.

Lear. Let me not stay a jot for dinner ; go, get it ready. [*Exit an Attendant.*] How now, what art thou ?

Kent. A man, sir.

Lear. What dost thou profess ? What wouldst thou with us ?

Kent. I do profess to be no less than I seem ; to serve him truly, that will put me in trust ; to love him that is honest ; to converse¹ with him that is wise, and says little ; to fear judgment ; to fight, when I cannot choose ; and to eat no fish.²

Lear. What art thou ?

Kent. A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the king.

Lear. If thou be as poor for a subject, as he is for a king, thou art poor enough. What wouldst thou ?

Kent. Service.

Lear. Who wouldst thou serve ?

Kent. You.

Lear. Dost thou know me, fellow ?

Kent. No, sir ; but you have that in your countenance, which I would fain call master.

Lear. What's that ?

Kent. Authority.

Lear. What services canst thou do ?

Kent. I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message bluntly. That which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified in ; and the best of me is diligence.

Lear. How old art thou ?

Kent. Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing ; nor so old, to dote on her for any thing. I have years on my back forty-eight.

¹ To converse signifies immediately and properly to *keep company*, to have commerce with.

² It is not clear how Kent means to make the *eating no fish* a commendatory quality, unless we suppose that it arose from the odium then cast upon the papists, who were the most strict observers of periodical fasts.

Lear. Follow me; thou shalt serve me; if I like thee no worse after dinner, I will not part from thee yet.—Dinner, ho, dinner!—Where's my knave? my fool? Go you, and call my fool hither.

Enter Steward.

You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter?

Stew. So please you—— *[Exit.*

Lear. What says the fellow there? Call the clot-poll back.—Where's my fool, ho?—I think the world's asleep.—How now? where's that mongrel?

Knight. He says, my lord, your daughter is not well.

Lear. Why came not the slave back to me, when I called him?

Knight. Sir, he answered me in the roundest manner, he would not.

Lear. He would not!

Knight. My lord, I know not what the matter is; but, to my judgment, your highness is not entertained with that ceremonious affection as you were wont; there's a great abatement of kindness appears, as well in the general dependants, as in the duke himself also, and your daughter.

Lear. Ha! say'st thou so?

Knight. I beseech you, pardon me, my lord, if I be mistaken; for my duty cannot be silent, when I think your highness is wronged.

Lear. Thou but remember'st me of mine own conception. I have perceived a most faint neglect of late; which I have rather blamed as mine own jealous curiosity,¹ than as a very pretence² and purpose of unkindness: I will look further into't.—But where's my fool? I have not seen him this two days.

Knight. Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away.

¹ By *jealous curiosity*, Lear appears to mean a *punctilious jealousy*, resulting from a scrupulous watchfulness of his own dignity. See the second note on the first scene of this play.

² A *very pretence* is an *absolute design*.

Lear. No more of that; I have noted it well.—
Go you, and tell my daughter I would speak with her.
Go you, and call hither my fool.—

Re-enter Steward.

O you sir, you sir, come you hither. Who am I, sir?

Stew. My lady's father.

Lear. My lady's father! my lord's knave; you
whoreson dog! you slave! you cur!

Stew. I am none of this, my lord; I beseech you,
pardon me.

Lear. Do you bandy¹ looks with me, you rascal?

[*Striking him.*]

Stew. I'll not be struck, my lord.

Kent. Nor tripped neither; you base foot-ball player.

[*Tripping up his heels.*]

Lear. I thank thee, fellow; thou servest me, and
I'll love thee.

Kent. Come, sir, arise, away; I'll teach you differ-
ences; away, away. If you will measure your lubber's
length again, tarry; but away: go to. Have you
wisdom? so.

[*Pushes the Steward out.*]

Lear. Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee;
there's earnest of thy service. [*Giving KENT money.*]

Enter Fool.

Fool. Let me hire him too;—here's my coxcomb.

[*Giving KENT his cap.*]

Lear. How now, my pretty knave? how dost thou?

Fool. Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. Why? For taking one's part that is out of
favor; nay, an thou canst not smile as the wind sits,

¹ A metaphor from tennis. "Come in and take this *bandy* with the racket of patience."—*Decker's Satiromastix*. "To *bandy* a ball," Cole defines *clava pilam torquere*; "To *bandy* at tennis," *reticulo pellere*. "To *bandy* blows," is still a common idiom.

thou'lt catch cold shortly.¹ There, take my coxcomb. Why, this fellow has banished two of his daughters, and did the third a blessing against his will; if thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb.²—How now, nuncle?³ 'Would I had two coxcombs and two daughters!

Lear. Why, my boy?

Fool. If I gave them all my living,⁴ I'd keep my coxcombs myself. There's mine; beg another of thy daughters.

Lear. Take heed, sirrah; the whip.

Fool. Truth's a dog that must to kennel. He must be whipped out, when lady, the brach,⁵ may stand by the fire, and stink.

Lear. A pestilent gall to me!

Fool. Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

Lear. Do.

Fool. Mark it, nuncle:—

Have more than thou showest,
 Speak less than thou knowest,
 Lend less than thou owest,⁶
 Ride more than thou goest,
 Learn more than thou trowest,⁷
 Set less than thou throwest,
 Leave thy drink and thy whore,
 And keep in-a-door,
 And thou shalt have more
 Than two tens to a score.

¹ I. e. be turned out of doors and exposed to the inclemency of the weather.

² The reader may see a representation of this ornament of the fool's cap, in Mr. Douce's *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, vol. ii. "Natural ideots and fools have, and still do accustome themselves to weare in their cappes cockes feathers, or a hat with a necke and heade of a cocke on the top, and a bell thereon."—*Minshew's Dictionary*, 1617.

³ A familiar contraction of *mine uncle*, as *ningle*, &c. It seems that the customary appellation of the old licensed fool to his superiors was *uncle*.

⁴ All my *estate* or *property*.

⁵ It has already been shown that *brach* was a *mannerly* name for a *bitch*.

⁶ To *owe* is to possess.

⁷ To *trow* is to believe. The precept is admirable. *Set*, in the next line, means *stake*.

Lear. This is nothing, fool.

Fool. Then 'tis like the breath of an unfee'd lawyer; you gave me nothing for't. Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?

Lear. Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.

Fool. 'Pr'ythee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to; he will not believe a fool. [*To KENT.*]

Lear. A bitter fool!

Fool. Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet fool?

Lear. [No, lad; teach me.

Fool. That lord, that counselled thee

To give away thy land,

Come place him here by me,—

Or do thou for him stand.

The sweet and bitter fool

Will presently appear;

The one in motley here,

The other found out there.

Lear. Dost thou call me fool, boy?

Fool. All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.

Kent. This is not altogether fool, my lord.

Fool. No, 'faith, lords and great men will not let me; if I had a monopoly out, they would have part on't: and ladies, too, they will not let me have all fool to myself; they'll be snatching.¹—Give me an egg, nuncle, and I'll give thee two crowns.

Lear. What two crowns shall they be?

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle, and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back over the dirt. Thou had'st little wit in thy bald crown, when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so.

¹ The passage in brackets is omitted in the folio, perhaps for political reasons, as it seems to censure the monopolies, the gross abuses of which were more legitimate than safe objects of satire.

*Fools had ne'er less grace in a year,¹ [Singing.
For wise men are grown foppish ;
And know not how their wits to wear,
Their manners are so apish.*

Lear. When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah ?

Fool. I have used it, nuncle, ever since thou madest thy daughters thy mother ; for when thou gavest them the rod, and put'st down thine own breeches,

*Then they for sudden joy did weep, [Singing.
And I for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep,
And go the fools among.*

Pr'ythee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy fool to lie ; I would fain learn to lie.

Lear. If you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipped.

Fool. I marvel, what kin thou² and thy daughters are. They'll have me whipped for speaking true, thou'lt have me whipped for lying ; and, sometimes, I am whipped for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind of thing than a fool ; and yet I would not be thee, nuncle ; thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides, and left nothing in the middle. Here comes one o' the parings.

Enter GONERIL.

Lear. How now, daughter ! what makes that frontlet³ on ? Methinks you are too much of late i' the frown.

Fool. Thou wast a pretty fellow, when thou had'st

¹ "There never was a time when fools were less in favor." In *Mother Bombye*, a Comedy, by Lyly, 1594, we find, "I think gentlemen *had never less wit in a year*." It is remarkable that the quartos read "*less wit*," instead of "*less grace*," which is the reading of the folio.

² A *frontlet*, or forehead-cloth, was worn by ladies of old, to prevent wrinkles. Thus in *Zepheria*, a collection of Sonnets, 4to. 1594 :—

"But now, my sunne, it fits thou take thy set
And vayne thy face with *frownes* as with a *frontlet*."

no need to care for her frowning ; now thou art an O¹ without a figure. I am better than thou art now ; I am a fool, thou art nothing.—Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue ! so your face [*To Gon.*] bids me, though you say nothing. Mum, mum,

He that keeps nor crust nor crum,

Weary of all, shall want some.

That's a shealed peascod.² [*Pointing to LEAR.*]

Gon. Not only, sir, this your all-licensed fool,
But other of your insolent retinue
Do hourly carp and quarrel ; breaking forth
In rank and not-to-be-endurèd riots. Sir,
I had thought, by making this well known unto you,
To have found a safe redress ; but now grow fearful,
By what yourself too late have spoke and done,
That you protect this course, and put it on³
By your allowance ; which if you should, the fault
Would not 'scape censure, nor the redresses sleep ;
Which in the tender of a wholesome weal,
Might in their working do you that offence,
Which else were shame, that then necessity
Will call discreet proceeding.

Fool. For you trow, nuncle,
The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,
That it had its head bit off by its young.
So, out went the candle, and we were left darkling.⁴

Lear. Are you our daughter ?

Gon. Come, sir,⁵ I would you would make use of
that good wisdom whereof I know you are fraught ;

¹ i. e. a cipher.

² Now a mere husk that contains nothing.

³ *Put on*, that is, *promote it*, push it forward. *Allowance* is *approbation*.

⁴ "Shakspeare's fools are certainly copied from the life. The originals whom he copied were no doubt men of quick parts ; lively and sarcastic. Though they were licensed to say any thing, it was still necessary, to prevent giving offence, that every thing they said should have a playful air ; we may suppose, therefore, that they had a custom of taking off the edge of too sharp a speech by covering it hastily with the end of an old song, or any glib nonsense that came into their mind. I know no other way of accounting for the incoherent words with which Shakspeare often finishes this fool's speeches."—*Sir Joshua Reynolds*.

⁵ The folio omits these words, and reads the rest of the speech. perhaps rightly, as verse.

and put away these dispositions, which of late transform you from what you rightly are.

Fool. May not an ass know when the cart draws the horse? Whoop, Jug! I love thee.

Lear. Does any here know me?—Why, this is not Lear; does Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes? Either his notion weakens, or his discernings are lethargied.—Sleeping or waking?—Ha! sure 'tis not so.—Who is it that can tell me who I am?¹

Fool. Lear's shadow,—

Lear. [I would learn that; for by the marks of sovereignty, knowledge, and reason, I should be false persuaded I had daughters.

Fool. Which they will make an obedient father.]

Lear. Your name, fair gentlewoman?

Gon. Come, sir;

This admiration is much o'the favor²
Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you
To understand my purposes aright;
As you are old and reverend, you should be wise.
Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires,
Men so disordered, so debauched, and bold,
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn; epicurism and lust
Make it more like a tavern or a brothel,
Than a graced palace. The shame itself doth speak
For instant remedy. Be then desired
By her that else will take the thing she begs,
A little to disquantity your train;
And the remainder, that shall still depend,³
To be such men as may besort your age,
And know themselves and you.

Lear. Darkness and devils!—
Saddle my horses; call my train together.—

¹ This passage has been erroneously printed in all the late editions. "Who is it can tell me who I am?" says Lear. In the folio, the reply, "Lear's shadow," is rightly given to the fool. It is remarkable that the continuation of Lear's speech, and the continuation of the fool's comment, is omitted in the folio copy.

² i. e. of the complexion.

³ i. e. continue in service.

Degenerate bastard ! I'll not trouble thee ;
Yet have I left a daughter.

Gon. You strike my people ; and your disordered
rabble
Make servants of their betters.

Enter ALBANY.

Lear. Woe, that too late repents,¹—O sir, are you
come ?
Is it your will ? [*To ALB.*] Speak, sir.—Prepare my
horses.

Ingratitude ! thou marble-hearted fiend,
More hideous, when thou show'st thee in a child,
Than the sea-monster !²

Alb. 'Pray, sir, be patient.

Lear. Detested kite ! thou liest. [*To GONERIL.*
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
That all particulars of duty know ;
And in the most exact regard support
The worships of their name.—O most small fault,
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show !
Which, like an engine,³ wrenched my frame of nature
From the fixed place ; drew from my heart all love,
And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear !
Beat at this gate that let thy folly in,

[*Striking his head.*

And thy dear judgment out.—Go, go, my people.

Alb. My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant
Of what hath moved you.

Lear. It may be so, my lord.—Hear, nature, hear ;
Dear goddess, hear ! Suspend thy purpose, if
Thou didst intend to make this creature fruitful !
Into her womb convey sterility !
Dry up in her the organs of increase ;

¹ One of the quarto copies reads, "*We that too late repents us.*" The others, "*We that too late repents.*"

² The *sea-monster* is the hippopotamus, the hieroglyphical symbol of impiety and ingratitude.

³ By an *engine* the *rack* is here intended.

And from her derogate¹ body never spring
 A babe to honor her! If she must teem,
 Create her child of spleen; that it may live,
 And be a thwart² disnatured torment to her!
 Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth;
 With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks;
 Turn all her mother's pains, and benefits,³
 To laughter and contempt; that she may feel
 How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
 To have a thankless child!—Away! away! *[Exit.*

Alb. Now, gods, that we adore, whereof comes this?

Gon. Never afflict yourself to know the cause;
 But let his disposition have that scope
 That dotage gives it.

Re-enter LEAR.

Lear. What, fifty of my followers at a clap!
 Within a fortnight?

Alb. What's the matter, sir?

Lear. I'll tell thee;—Life and death! I am ashamed
 That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus;
[To GONERIL.

That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,
 Should make thee worth them.—Blasts and fogs upon
 thee!

The untented⁴ woundings of a father's curse
 Pierce every sense about thee!—Old fond eyes,
 Beweep this cause again, I'll pluck you out;
 And cast you, with the waters that you lose,

¹ *Derogate* here means *degenerate, degraded*.

² *Thwart* as a noun adjective is not frequent in our language. It is to be found, however, in *Promos* and *Cassandra*, 1578:—

“Sith fortune *thwart* doth crosse my joys with care.”

Disnatured is wanting natural affection.

³ “*Pains* and *benefits*,” in this place, signify maternal *cares* and *good offices*.

⁴ The *untented* woundings are the *rankling* or *never-healing wounds* inflicted by a parental malediction. *Tenis* are well-known dressings inserted into wounds as a preparative to healing them.

To temper clay.—Ha! is it come to this?
 Let it be so.—Yet have I left a daughter,
 Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable;
 When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails
 She'll flay thy wolfish visage. Thou shalt find
 That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think
 I have cast off forever; thou shalt, I warrant thee.¹

[*Exeunt* LEAR, KENT, and Attendants.]

Gon. Do you mark that, my lord?

Alb. I cannot be so partial, Goneril,
 To the great love I bear you,—

Gon. 'Pray you, content.—What, Oswald, ho!
 You sir, more knave than fool, after your master.

[*To the Fool.*

Fool. Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry, and take
 the fool with thee.

A fox, when one has caught her,
 And such a daughter,
 Should sure to the slaughter,
 If my cap would buy a halter;
 So the fool follows after.

[*Exit.*

*Gon.*² [This man hath had good counsel;—a hundred knights!

'Tis politic, and safe, to let him keep
 At point,³ a hundred knights! Yes, that on every dream,
 Each buzz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike,
 He may enguard his dotage with their powers,
 And hold our lives in mercy.] Oswald, I say!—

Alb. Well, you may fear too far.

Gon. Safer than trust too far;
 Let me still take away the harms I fear,
 Not fear still to be taken. I know his heart;
 What he hath uttered, I have writ my sister;
 If she sustain him and his hundred knights,

¹ This speech is gleaned partly from the folios, and partly from the quartos. The omissions in the one and the other are not of sufficient importance to trouble the reader with a separate notice of each.

² All within brackets is omitted in the quartos.

³ *At point* probably means completely armed.

When I have showed the unfitness,—How now, Oswald?

Enter Steward.

What, have you writ that letter to my sister?

Stew. Ay, madam.

Gon. Take you some company, and away to horse; Inform her full of my particular fear; And thereto add such reasons of your own, As may compact it more. Get you gone; And hasten your return. [*Exit Stew.*] No, no, my lord,

This milky gentleness, and course of yours, Though I condemn it not, yet, under pardon, You are much more attasked¹ for want of wisdom, Than praised for harmful mildness.

Alb. How far your eyes may pierce, I cannot tell; Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.

Gon. Nay, then,—

Alb. Well, well; the event. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V. Court before the same.

Enter LEAR, KENT, and Fool.

Lear. Go you before to Gloster with these letters; acquaint my daughter no further with any thing you know, than comes from her demand out of the letter. If your diligence be not speedy, I shall be there before you.²

Kent. I will not sleep, my lord, till I have delivered your letter. [*Exit.*]

¹ The word *task* is frequently used by Shakspeare and his contemporaries in the sense of *tax*.

² The word *there*, in this speech, shows that when the king says, "Go you before to *Gloster*," he means the town of Gloster, which Shakspeare chose to make the residence of the duke of Cornwall, to increase the probability of their setting out late from thence on a visit to the earl of Gloster. Our old English earls usually resided in the counties whence they took their titles. Lear, not finding his son-in-law and his wife at home, follows them to the earl of Gloster's castle.

Fool. If a man's brains were in his heels, were't not in danger of kibes?

Lear. Ay, boy.

Fool. Then, I pr'ythee, be merry; thy wit shall not go slip-shod.

Lear. Ha, ha, ha!

Fool. Shalt see, thy other daughter will use thee kindly;¹ for though she's as like this as a crab is like an apple, yet I can tell what I can tell.

Lear. Why, what canst thou tell, my boy?

Fool. She will taste as like this, as a crab does to a crab. Thou canst tell, why one's nose stands i' the middle of his face?

Lear. No.

Fool. Why, to keep his eyes on either side his nose; that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into.

Lear. I did her wrong.²—

Fool. Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

Lear. No.

Fool. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

Lear. Why?

Fool. Why, to put his head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

Lear. I will forget my nature.—So kind a father! —Be my horses ready?

Fool. Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars are no more than seven, is a pretty reason.

Lear. Because they are not eight?

Fool. Yes, indeed; thou wouldst make a good fool.

Lear. To take it again perforce!³—Monster ingratitude!

¹ The fool quibbles, using the word in two senses; as it means *affectionately*, and like the rest of her *kind*, or after their *nature*.

² He is musing on Cordelia.

³ The subject of Lear's meditation is the resumption of that moiety of the kingdom he had bestowed on Goneril. This was what Albany apprehended, when he replied to the upbraidings of his wife:—"Well,

Fool. If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

Lear. How's that?

Fool. Thou shouldst not have been old, before thou hadst been wise.

Lear. O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet Heaven! Keep me in temper; I would not be mad!—

Enter Gentleman.

How now! are the horses ready?

Gent. Ready, my lord.

Lear. Come, boy.

Fool. She that is maid now, and laughs at my departure,

Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A Court within the Castle of the Earl of Gloster.*

Enter EDMUND and CURAN, meeting.

Edm. Save thee, Curan.

Cur. And you, sir. I have been with your father, and given him notice, that the duke of Cornwall, and Regan his duchess, will be here with him to-night.

Edm. How comes that?

well: the event." What Lear himself projected when he left Goneril to go to Regan:—

"——— Thou shalt find

That I'll resume the shape, which thou dost think

I have cast off forever; thou shalt, I warrant thee."

And what Curan afterwards refers to, when he asks Edmund:—"Have you heard of no likely wars toward, 'twixt the dukes of Cornwall and Albany?"

Cur. Nay, I know not. You have heard of the news abroad; I mean the whispered ones, for they are yet but ear-kissing arguments?¹

Edm. Not I; 'pray you, what are they?

Cur. Have you heard of no likely wars toward,² 'twixt the dukes of Cornwall and Albany?

Edm. Not a word.

Cur. You may then, in time. Fare you well, sir.

[*Exit.*

Edm. The duke be here to-night? The better!
Best!

This weaves itself perforce into my business!
My father hath set guard to take my brother;
And I have one thing, of a queasy³ question,
Which I must act.—Briefness, and fortune, work!—
Brother, a word; descend.—Brother, I say;

Enter EDGAR.

My father watches.—O sir, fly this place;
Intelligence is given where you are hid;
You have now the good advantage of the night.—
Have you not spoken 'gainst the duke of Cornwall?
He's coming hither; now, i' the night, i' the haste,
And Regan with him. Have you nothing said
Upon his party 'gainst the duke of Albany?⁴
Advise⁵ yourself.

Edg. I am sure on't, not a word.

Edm. I hear my father coming.—Pardon me;—
In cunning, I must draw my sword upon you.—
Draw: seem to defend yourself: now quit you well.
Yield;—come before my father;—light, ho, here!
Fly, brother:—Torches! torches!—So farewell.

[*Exit* EDGAR.]

¹ *Ear-kissing arguments* means that they are yet in reality only *whispered ones*.

² This and the following speech are omitted in the quarto B.

³ *Queasy* appears to mean here *delicate, unsettled*.

⁴ Have you said nothing upon the party formed by him against the duke of Albany?

⁵ i. e. consider, recollect yourself.

Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion
 Of my more fierce endeavor ; I have seen drunkards
 Do more than this in sport.—Father ! father !
 Stop, stop ! No help ?

Enter GLOSTER, and Servants, with torches.

Glo. Now, Edmund, where's the villain ?

Edm. Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out,
 Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon
 To stand his auspicious mistress.

Glo. But where is he ?

Edm. Look, sir, I bleed.

Glo. Where is the villain, Edmund ?

Edm. Fled this way, sir. When by no means he
 could——

Glo. Pursue him, ho !—Go after.—[*Exit Serv.*] By
 no means,—what ?

Edm. Persuade me to the murder of your lordship ;
 But that I told him, the revenging gods
 'Gainst parricides did all their thunders bend ;
 Spoke, with how manifold and strong a bond
 The child was bound to the father ;—sir, in fine,
 Seeing how loathly opposite I stood
 To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion,
 With his prepared sword, he charges home
 My unprovided body, lanced mine arm :
 But when he saw my best alarumed spirits,
 Bold in the quarrel's right, roused to the encounter,
 Or whether gasted¹ by the noise I made,
 Full suddenly he fled.

Glo. Let him fly far.
 Not in this land shall he remain uncaught ;
 And found—Despatch.²—The noble duke, my master,

¹ That is, *aghasted, frightened*.

² "And found—Despatch.—The noble duke," &c.—The sense is interrupted. He shall be caught—and found, *he shall be punished*. Despatch.

My worthy arch¹ and patron, comes to-night ;
 By his authority I will proclaim it,
 That he which finds him shall deserve our thanks,
 Bringing the murderous coward to the stake ;
 He that conceals him, death.

Edm. When I dissuaded him from his intent,
 And found him pight to do it, with curst speech,²
 I threatened to discover him. He replied,
Thou unpossessing bastard ! dost thou think,
If I would stand against thee, would the reposal³
Of any trust, virtue, or worth, in thee
Make thy words faithed ? No ; what I should deny,
(As this I would ; ay, though thou didst produce
My very character,⁴) I'd turn it all
To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practice ;
And thou must make a dullard of the world,
If they not thought the profits of my death
Were very pregnant and potential spurs⁵
To make thee seek it.

Glo. Strong and fastened villain ;
 Would he deny his letter ?—I never got him.

[*Trumpets within.*]

Hark, the duke's trumpets ! I know not why he
 comes.—

All ports I'll bar ; the villain shall not 'scape ;
 The duke must grant me that. Besides, his picture
 I will send far and near, that all the kingdom
 May have due note of him ; and of my land,
 Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means
 To make thee capable.⁶

¹ i. e. *chief* ; now only used in composition.

² " And found him *pight* to do it, with *curst* speech." *Pight* is *pitched*, *fixed*, *settled* ; *curst* is *vehemently angry*, *bitter*.

³ i. e. would any opinion that men have reposed in thy trust, virtue, &c. The old quarto reads, "*could the reposeure.*"

⁴ i. e. my hand-writing, my signature.

⁵ The folio reads, "*potential spirits.*" And in the next line but one, "*O strange and fastened villain.*"—*Strong* is *determined*, *resolute*. Our ancestors often used it in an ill sense ; as *strong* thief, *strong* whore, &c.

⁶ i. e. capable of succeeding to my land, notwithstanding the legal bar of thy illegitimacy.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, *and* Attendants.

Corn. How now, my noble friend? since I came
hither

(Which I can call but now) I have heard strange news.

Reg. If it be true, all vengeance comes too short,
Which can pursue the offender. How dost, my lord?

Glo. O madam, my old heart is cracked, is cracked!

Reg. What, did my father's godson seek your life?
He whom my father named? your Edgar?

Glo. O lady, lady, shame would have it hid!

Reg. Was he not companion with the riotous knights
That tend upon my father?

Glo. I know not, madam;

It is too bad, too bad.—

Edm. Yes, madam, he was.

Reg. No marvel, then, though he were ill-affected;
'Tis they have put him on the old man's death,
To have the waste and spoil of his revenues.
I have this present evening from my sister
Been well informed of them; and with such cautions,
That, if they come to sojourn at my house,
I'll not be there.

Corn. Nor I, assure thee, Regan.—
Edmund, I hear that you have shown your father
A child-like office.

Edm. 'Twas my duty, sir.

Glo. He did bewray his practice,¹ and received
This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.

Corn. Is he pursued?

Glo. Ay, my good lord, he is.

Corn. If he be taken, he shall never more
Be feared of doing harm: make your own purpose,
How in my strength you please.—For you, Edmund,
Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant
So much commend itself, you shall be ours;
Natures of such deep trust we shall much need;
You we first seize on.

¹ "Bewray his practice." That is, he did betray or reveal his treacherous devices. The quartos read *betray*.

Edm. I shall serve you, sir,
 Truly, however else.
Glo. For him I thank your grace.
Corn. You know not why we came to visit you,—
Reg. Thus out of season ; threading dark-eyed night.
 Occasions, noble Gloster, of some poize,¹
 Wherein we must have use of your advice :—
 Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,
 Of differences, which I best thought it fit
 To answer from our home ;² the several messengers
 From hence attend despatch. Our good old friend,
 Lay comforts to your bosom ; and bestow
 Your needful counsel to our business,
 Which craves the instant use.
Glo. I serve you, madam ;
 Your graces are right welcome. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *Before Gloster's Castle.*

Enter KENT and Steward, severally.

Stew. Good dawning³ to thee, friend. Art of the house ?
Kent. Ay.
Stew. Where may we set our horses ?
Kent. I' the mire.
Stew. 'Pr'ythee, if thou love me, tell me.
Kent. I love thee not.
Stew. Why, then I care not for thee.
Kent. If I had thee in Lipsbury pinfold,⁴ I would make thee care for me.
Stew. Why dost thou use me thus ? I know thee not.
Kent. Fellow, I know thee.

¹ i. e. of some *weight*, or *moment*. The folio and quarto B. read *prize*.

² That is, not at home, but at some other place.

³ The quartos read "good even." It is clear, from various passages in this scene, that the morning is just beginning to dawn.

⁴ i. e. *Lipsbury pound*. "*Lipsbury pinfold*" may, perhaps, like *Lob's pound*, be a coined name ; but with what allusion does not appear.

Stew. What dost thou know me for ?

Kent. A knave, a rascal, an eater of broken meats ; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy worsted-stocking knave ; a lily-livered, action-taking knave ; a whoreson, glass-gazing, super-serviceable, finical rogue ; one-trunk-inheriting slave ; one that wouldst be a bawd, in way of good-service, and art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pander, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch ; one whom I will beat into clamorous whining, if thou deniest the least syllable of thy addition.¹

Stew. Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou, thus to rail on one that is neither known of thee, nor knows thee !

Kent. What a brazen-faced varlet art thou, to deny thou knowest me ! Is it two days ago, since I tripped up thy heels, and beat thee, before the king ? Draw, you rogue ; for, though it be night, the moon shines ; I'll make a sop o' the moonshine² of you. Draw, you whoreson cullionly barber-monger,³ draw.

[*Drawing his sword.*

Stew. Away ; I have nothing to do with thee.

Kent. Draw, you rascal ! you come with letters against the king ; and take Vanity⁴ the puppet's part, against the royalty of her father. Draw, you rogue, or I'll so carbonado your shanks.—Draw, you rascal ; come your ways.

Stew. Help, ho ! murder ! help !

Kent. Strike, you slave ; stand, rogue, stand ; you neat slave,⁵ strike.

[*Beating him.*

Stew. Help, ho ! murder ! murder !

¹ i. e. thy titles.

² Probably alluding to some dish so called.

³ *Barber-monger* may mean *dealer with the lower tradesmen*.

⁴ Alluding to the moralities or allegorical shows, in which *Vanity*, *Iniquity*, and other vices, were personified.

⁵ You *finical* rascal, you assemblage of *foppery and poverty*.

Enter EDMUND, CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOSTER, and Servants.

Edm. How now? what's the matter? *Part.*

Kent. With you goodman boy, if you please; *come*, I'll flesh you; come on, young master.

Glo. Weapons! arms! What's the matter here?

Corn. Keep peace, upon your lives;
He dies, that strikes again. What is the matter?

Reg. The messengers from our sister and the king.

Corn. What is your difference? speak.

Stew. I am scarce in breath, my lord.

Kent. No marvel, you have so bestirred your valor.
You cowardly rascal, nature disclaims in¹ thee; a tailor made thee.

Corn. Thou art a strange fellow; a tailor make a man?

Kent. Ay, a tailor, sir; a stone-cutter, or a painter, could not have made him so ill, though they had been but two hours at the trade.

Corn. Speak yet, how grew your quarrel?

Stew. This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I have spared,

At suit of his gray beard,—

Kent. Thou whoreson zed!² thou unnecessary letter!—My lord, if you will give me leave, I will tread this unbolted³ villain into mortar, and daub the wall of a jakes with him.—Spare my gray beard, you wagtail?

Corn. Peace, sirrah!

You beastly knave, know you no reverence?

Kent. Yes, sir; but anger has a privilege.

Corn. Why art thou angry?

¹ To *disclaim* in, for *to disclaim* simply, was the phraseology of the Poet's age. See Gifford's Ben Jonson, vol. iii. p. 264.

² *Zed* is here used as a term of contempt, because it is the last letter in the English alphabet. Baret omits it in his *Alvearie*, affirming it to be rather a syllable than a letter. And Mulcaster says, "Z is much harder amongst us, and seldom seen. S is become its *lieutenant-general*."

³ *Coarse* villain. *Unbolted* mortar is mortar made of unsifted lime; and therefore to break the lumps, it is necessary to tread it by men in wooden shoes.

Kent. That such a slave as this should wear a sword,

Who wears no honesty. Such smiling rogues as these,
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords atwain
Which are too intrinse¹ t' unloose; smooth every passion
That in the natures of their lords rebels;
Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods;
Renege,² affirm, and turn their halcyon³ beaks
With every gale and vary of their masters,
As knowing nought, like dogs, but following.—
A plague upon your epileptic visage!
Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool?
Goose, if I had you upon Sarum-plain,
I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.⁴

Corn. What, art thou mad, old fellow?

Glo. How fell you out?

Say that.

Kent. No contraries hold more antipathy,
Than I and such a knave.

Corn. Why dost thou call him knave? What's his offence?

Kent. His countenance likes me not.⁵

Corn. No more, perchance, does mine, or his, or hers.

Kent. Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain;
I have seen better faces in my time,
Than stands on any shoulder that I see
Before me at this instant.

Corn. This is some fellow,
Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect

¹ The quartos read, to *intrench*; the folio, t' *intrince*. Perhaps *intrinse*, for so it should be written, was put by Shakspeare for *intrinsicate*, which he has used in *Antony and Cleopatra*. The word *too* in the text is substituted for *to* by Mr. Singer.

² To *renege* is to *deny*.

³ The bird called the kingfisher, which, when dried and hung up by a thread, is supposed to turn his bill to the point from whence the wind blows.

⁴ In Somersetshire, near *Camelot*, are many large moors, where are bred great quantities of geese.

⁵ i. e. pleases me not.

A saucy roughness; and constrains the garb,
Quite from his nature.¹ He cannot flatter, he!—
An honest mind and plain,—he must speak truth.
An they will take it, so; if not, he's plain.
These kind of knaves I know, which in this plainness
Harbor more craft, and more corrupter ends,
Than twenty silly² ducking observants,
That stretch their duties nicely.

Kent. Sir, in good sooth, in sincere verity,
Under the allowance of your grand aspect,
Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire

On flickering³ Phoebus' front,—

Corn. What mean'st by this?

Kent. To go out of my dialect, which you discommend so much. I know, sir, I am no flatterer. He that beguiled you, in a plain accent, was a plain knave; which, for my part, I will not be, though I should win your displeasure to entreat me to it.⁴

Corn. What was the offence you gave him?

Stew. I never gave him any.

It pleased the king, his master, very late,
To strike at me, upon his misconstruction;
When he, conjunct, and flattering his displeasure,
Tripped me behind; being down, insulted, railed,
And put upon him such a deal of man,
That worthied him, got praises of the king,
For him attempting who was self-subdued;
And, in the fleshment⁵ of this dread exploit,
Drew on me here again.

¹ "Forces his *outside*, or his appearance, to something totally different from his natural disposition."

² *Silly*, or rather *sely*, is simple or rustic. *Nicely* here is with scrupulous nicety, punctilious observance.

³ This expressive word is now only applied to the motion and scintillation of flame. Dr. Johnson says, that it means to flutter, which is certainly one of its oldest meanings, it being used in that sense by Chaucer.

⁴ "Though I should win you, displeased as you now are, to like me so well as to entreat me to be a knave."

⁵ A young soldier is said to *flesh* his sword the first time he draws blood with it. *Fleshment*, therefore, is here metaphorically applied to the first act of service, which Kent, in his new capacity, had performed for his master.

Kent. None of these rogues, and cowards,
But Ajax is their fool.¹

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks, ho !
You stubborn, ancient knave, you reverend braggart,
We'll teach you—

Kent. Sir, I am too old to learn ;
Call not your stocks for me. I serve the king ;
On whose employment I was sent to you.
You shall do small respect, show too bold malice
Against the grace and person of my master,
Stocking his messenger.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks ;
As I've life and honor, there shall he sit till noon.

Reg. Till noon ! till night, my lord ; and all night
too.

Kent. Why, madam, if I were your father's dog,
You should not use me so.

Reg. Sir, being his knave, I will.
[*Stocks brought out.*]

Corn. This is a fellow of the self-same color
Our sister speaks of.—Come, bring away the stocks.

Glo. Let me beseech your grace not to do so.
[His fault is much, and the good king his master
Will check him for't: your purposed low correction
Is such, as basest and contemned'st wretches
For pilferings and most common trespasses,
Are punished with ;]² the king his master needs must
take it ill,

That he, so slightly valued in his messenger,
Should have him thus restrained.

Corn. I'll answer that.

Reg. My sister may receive it much more worse,
To have her gentleman abused, assaulted.

[*KENT is put in the stocks.*]
Come, my good lord ; away.

[*Exeunt REGAN and CORNWALL.*]

Glo. I am sorry for thee, friend ; 'tis the duke's
pleasure,

¹ i. e. Ajax is a fool to them.

² The sentence in brackets is not in the first folio.

Whose disposition, all the world well knows,
Will not be rubbed, nor stopped;¹ I'll entreat for thee.

Kent. 'Pray, do not, sir. I have watched, and
travelled hard;
Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle.
A good man's fortune may grow out at heels;
Give you good morrow!

Glo. The duke's to blame in this; 'twill be ill
taken. [*Exit.*

Kent. Good king, that must approve the common
saw!²

Thou out of Heaven's benediction com'st
To the warm sun!
Approach, thou beacon to this under-globe,
That by thy comfortable beams I may
Peruse this letter!—Nothing almost sees miracles,
But misery.—I know 'tis from Cordelia;
Who hath most fortunately been informed
Of my obscured course; and shall find time
From this enormous state,—seeking,—to give
Losses their remedies.³—All weary and o'er-watched,
Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold
This shameful lodging.
Fortune, good night; smile once more; turn thy wheel!
[*He sleeps.*

¹ A metaphor from bowling.

² The *saw*, or proverb alluded to, is in Heywood's Dialogues on Proverbs,
b. ii. c. v. :—

“In your running from him to me, ye runne
Out of God's blessing into the warme sunne.”

i. e. from good to worse. Kent was thinking of the king being likely to receive a worse reception from Regan than that which he had already received from Goneril.

³ Kent addresses the sun, for whose rising he is impatient, that he may read Cordelia's letter. “Nothing (says he) almost sees miracles, but misery: I know *this letter which I hold in my hand* is from Cordelia; who hath most fortunately been informed of my disgrace and wandering in disguise; and *who*, seeking it, shall find time (i. e. opportunity), out of this enormous (i. e. disordered, unnatural) state of things, to give losses their remedies; to restore her father to his kingdom, herself to his love, and me to his favor.”

SCENE III. *A Part of the Heath.**Enter* EDGAR.

Edg. I heard myself proclaimed ;
 And, by the happy hollow of a tree,
 Escaped the hunt. No port is free ; no place,
 That guard, and most unusual vigilance,
 Does not attend my taking. While I may 'scape,
 I will preserve myself ; and am bethought
 To take the basest and most poorest shape,
 That ever penury, in contempt of man,
 Brought near to beast. My face I'll grime with filth ;
 Blanket my loins ; elf all my hair in knots ;¹
 And with presented nakedness outface
 The winds, and persecutions of the sky.
 The country gives me proof and precedent
 Of Bedlam beggars,² who, with roaring voices,
 Strike in their numbed and mortified bare arms
 Pins, wooden pricks,³ nails, sprigs of rosemary ;
 And with this horrible object, from low farms,
 Poor pelting⁴ villages, sheep-cotes and mills,
 Sometime with lunatic bans,⁵ sometime with prayers,
 Enforce their charity.—Poor Turlygood !⁶ Poor Tom !
 That's something yet ; Edgar I nothing am. [*Exit.*]

¹ Hair thus knotted was supposed to be the work of elves and fairies in the night.

² In the *Bell-Man of London*, by Decker, 5th edit. 1640, is an account of one of these characters, under the title of *Abraham Man* :—
 "He sweares he hath been in Bedlam, and will talke frantickely of purpose : you see pinnes stuck in sundry places of his naked flesh, especially in his armes, which paine he gladly puts himselfe to, only to make you believe he is out of his wits. He calls himselfe by the name of *Poore Tom*, and coming near any body, cries out *Poor Tom is a-cold.*"

³ i. e. skewers : the *suonymus*, or spindle-tree, of which the best skewers are made, is called *prick-wood*.

⁴ Paltry.

⁵ Curses.

⁶ *Turlygood*, an English corruption of *turluru* (Ital.), or *turlureau* (Fr.) ; both, among other things, signifying a fool or madman. It would, perhaps, be difficult to decide with certainty whether those words are corruptions of *turlupino* and *turlupin* ; but at least it seems probable. The *Turlupins* were a fanatical sect, which overran the continent in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, calling themselves *Beghards* or *Beghins*. Their manners and appearance exhibited the strongest indica-

SCENE IV. *Before Gloster's Castle.*¹*Enter LEAR, Fool, and Gentleman.*

Lear. 'Tis strange, that they should so depart from home,
And not send back my messenger.

Gent. As I learned,
The night before there was no purpose in them
Of this remove.

Kent. Hail to thee, noble master!

Lear. How!
Mak'st thou this shame thy pastime?

Kent. No, my lord.

Fool. Ha, ha; look! he wears cruel² garters!
Horses are tied by the head; dogs and bears by the neck;
monkeys by the loins, and men by the legs;
when a man is over-lusty at legs, then he wears wooden
nether-stocks.³

Lear. What's he, that hath so much thy place mistook,
To set thee here?

Kent. It is both he and she,
Your son and daughter.

Lear. No!

Kent. Yes.

Lear. No, I say.

Kent. I say, yea.

Lear. No, no; they would not.

Kent. Yes, they have.

Lear. By Jupiter, I swear, no.

Kent. By Juno, I swear, ay.

Lear. They durst not do't;
They could not, would not do't; 'tis worse than murder,

tions of lunacy and distraction; and their popular name, *Turlupins*, was probably derived from the *wolfish howlings* they made in their fits of religious raving. Cotgrave interprets "*Mon Turelureau*, My Pillicock, my pretty knave."

¹ See note 2, Act i. Sc. 5. p. 39, ante.

² A quibble on *cruel*, i. e. *worsted*.

³ The old word for stockings.

To do, upon respect, such violent outrage.¹
 Resolve me, with all modest haste, which way
 Thou might'st deserve, or they impose, this usage,
 Coming from us.

Kent. My lord, when at their home
 I did commend your highness' letters to them,
 Ere I was risen from the place that showed
 My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,
 Stewed in his haste, half breathless, panting forth
 From Goneril his mistress, salutations ;
 Delivered letters, spite of intermission,²
 Which presently they read ; on whose contents,
 They summoned up their meiny,³ straight took horse ;
 Commanded me to follow, and attend
 The leisure of their answer ; gave me cold looks ;
 And meeting here the other messenger,
 Whose welcome, I perceived, had poisoned mine,
 (Being the very fellow that of late
 Displayed so saucily against your highness,)
 Having more man than wit about me, drew ;⁴
 He raised the house with loud and coward cries ;
 Your son and daughter found this trespass worth
 The shame which here it suffers.

Fool. Winter's not gone yet, if the wild geese fly
 that way.⁵

Fathers, that wear rags,
 Do make their children blind ;
 But fathers, that bear bags,
 Shall see their children kind.
 Fortune, that arrant whore,
 Ne'er turns the key to the poor.—

¹ "To do, upon respect, such violent outrage," means "to do such violent outrage, deliberately, or upon consideration." *Respect* is frequently used for *consideration* by Shakspeare.

² i. e. "spite of leaving me unanswered for a time."

³ *Meiny*, signifying a family household, or retinue of servants, is from the French *meinie*, anciently written *mesnie*.

⁴ The personal pronoun, which is found in the preceding line, is understood before the word *having*, or before *drew*. The same license is taken by Shakspeare in other places.

⁵ "If this be their behavior, the king's troubles are not yet at an end." This speech is omitted in the quartos.

But, for all this, thou shalt have as many dolours¹ for thy daughters, as thou canst tell in a year.

Lear. O, how this mother² swells up toward my heart! *Hysterica passio!* down, thou climbing sorrow, Thy element's below!—Where is this daughter?

Kent. With the earl, sir, here within.

Lear. Follow me not;
Stay here. [*Exit.*]

Gent. Made you no more offence than what you speak of?

Kent. None.

How chance the king comes with so small a train?

Fool. An thou hadst been set i' the stocks for that question, thou hadst well deserved it.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. We'll set thee to school to an ant,³ to teach thee there's no laboring in the winter. All that follow their noses are led by their eyes, but blind men; and there's not a nose among twenty, but can smell him that's stinking. Let go thy hold, when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following it; but the great one that goes up the hill, let him draw thee after. When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give me mine again; I would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it.

That, sir, which serves and seeks for gain,

And follows but for form,

Will pack, when it begins to rain,

And leave thee in the storm.

But I will tarry, the fool will stay,

And let the wise man fly:

The knave turns fool, that runs away;

The fool no knave, perdy.

¹ A quibble between *dolors* and *dollars*.

² Lear affects to pass off the swelling of his heart, ready to burst with grief and indignation, for the disease called the *mother*, or *hysterica passio*, which, in the Poet's time, was not thought peculiar to women only.

³ If, says the fool, you had been schooled by the ant, you would have known that the king's train, like that sagacious insect, prefer the summer of prosperity to the colder season of adversity, from which no profit can be derived; and desert him who has been left "open and bare for every storm that blows."

Kent. Where learned you this, fool?

Fool. Not i' the stocks, fool.

Re-enter LEAR, with GLOSTER.

Lear. Deny to speak with me? They are sick?
they are weary?

They have travelled hard to-night? Mere fetches:
The images of revolt and flying off!

Fetch me a better answer.

Glo. My dear lord,
You know the fiery quality of the duke;
How unremovable and fixed he is
In his own course.

Lear. Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!—
Fiery? what quality? Why, Gloster, Gloster,
I'd speak with the duke of Cornwall, and his wife.

Glo. Well, my good lord, I have informed them so.

Lear. Informed them! Dost thou understand me,
man?

Glo. Ay, my good lord.

Lear. The king would speak with Cornwall; the
dear father

Would with his daughter speak, commands her service.
Are they informed of this?—My breath and blood!—

Fiery? the fiery duke?—Tell the hot duke, that—

No, but not yet;—may be, he is not well.

Infirmity doth still neglect all office,

Whereto our health is bound; we are not ourselves,

When nature, being oppressed, commands the mind

To suffer with the body. I'll forbear;

And am fallen out with my more headier will,

To take the indisposed and sickly fit

For the sound man. Death on my state! wherefore

[*Looking on KENT.*

Should he sit here? This act persuades me,

That this remotion of the duke and her

Is practice only. Give me my servant forth.

Go, tell the duke and his wife, I'd speak with them,

Now, presently; bid them come forth and hear me,

Or at their chamber door I'll beat the drum,
Till it cry—*Sleep to death.*¹

Glo. I'd have all well betwixt you. [Exit.

Lear. O me, my heart, my rising heart!—but, down.

Fool. Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney² did to the eels, when she put them i'the paste alive; she rapped 'em o' the coxcombs with a stick, and cried, *Down, wantons, down.* 'Twas her brother, that, in pure kindness to his horse, buttered his hay.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOSTER, and Servants.

Lear. Good morrow to you both.

Corn. Hail to your grace!
[KENT is set at liberty.]

Reg. I am glad to see your highness.

Lear. Regan, I think you are; I know what reason I have to think so. If thou shouldst not be glad, I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb, Sepulchring an adulteress.—O, are you free?

[To KENT.]

Some other time for that.—Beloved Regan,
Thy sister's naught. O Regan, she hath tied
Sharp-toothed unkindness, like a vulture, here.—

[Points to his heart.]

I can scarce speak to thee; thou'lt not believe,
Of how depraved a quality——O Regan!

Reg. I pray you, sir, take patience; I have hope,
You less know how to value her desert,
Than she to scant her duty.³

Lear. Say, how is that?

Reg. I cannot think my sister in the least
Would fail her obligation. If, sir, perchance,
She have restrained the riots of your followers,

¹ The meaning of this passage seems to be, "I'll beat the drum till it cries out—*Let them awake no more; let their present sleep be their last.*" Mason would read, "death to sleep," instead of "sleep to death."

² A cockney and a ninny-hammer, or simpleton, were convertible terms.

³ This is somewhat inaccurately expressed. Shakspeare having, as on some other occasions, perplexed himself by the word *less*.

'Tis on such ground, and to such wholesome end,
As clears her from all blame.

Lear. My curses on her!

Reg. O sir, you are old;
Nature in you stands on the very verge
Of her confine. You should be ruled, and led
By some discretion, that discerns your state
Better than you yourself. Therefore, I pray you,
That to our sister you do make return;
Say, you have wronged her, sir.¹

Lear. Ask her forgiveness?
Do you but mark how this becomes the house.²

*Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;
Age is unnecessary;*³ *on my knees I beg,* [Kneeling.
That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food.

Reg. Good sir, no more; these are unsightly tricks.
Return you to my sister.

Lear. Never, Regan.
She hath abated me of half my train;
Looked black upon me; struck me with her tongue,
Most serpent-like, upon the very heart.—
All the stored vengeance of Heaven fall
On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones,
You taking airs, with lameness!

Corn. Fie, fie, fie!

Lear. You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding
flames
Into her scornful eyes! Infect her beauty,
You fen-sucked fogs, drawn by the powerful sun,
To fall⁴ and blast her pride!

Reg. O the blest gods!
So will you wish on me, when the rash mood is on.

Lear. No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse;
Thy tender-hefted⁵ nature shall not give

¹ "Say," &c. This line and the following speech is omitted in the quartos.

² i. e. the order of families, duties of relation.

³ *Unnecessary* is here used in the sense of *necessitous*.

⁴ *Fall* seems here to be used as an active verb, signifying to humble or pull down.

⁵ *Tender-hefted* may mean moved, or heaving with tenderness. The

Thee o'er to harshness ; her eyes are fierce, but thine
 Do comfort, and not burn. 'Tis not in thee
 To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,
 To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,¹
 And, in conclusion, to oppose the bolt
 Against my coming in. Thou better know'st
 The offices of nature, bond of childhood,
 Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude ;
 Thy half o' the kingdom hast thou not forgot,
 Wherein I thee endowed.

Reg. Good sir, to the purpose.
[Trumpets within.]

Lear. Who put my man i'the stocks ?

Corn. What trumpet's that ?

Enter Steward.

Reg. I know't, my sister's ; this approves her letter,
 That she would soon be here.—Is your lady come ?

Lear. This is a slave, whose easy-borrowed pride
 Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows.—
 Out, varlet, from my sight !

Corn. What means your grace ?

Lear. Who stocked my servant ? Regan, I have
 good hope
 Thou didst not know of't.—Who comes here ?
 Heavens,

Enter GONERIL.

If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
 Allow² obedience, if yourselves are old,
 Make it your cause ; send down, and take my part !—
 Art not ashamed to look upon this beard ?—

[To GONERIL.]

O Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand ?

quartos read *tender-hested*, which may be right, and signify giving tender
hests or commands.

¹ A *size* is a portion or allotment of food. The word and its origin
 are explained in Minsheu's *Guide to Tongues*, 1617. The term *sizer* is
 still used at Cambridge for one of the lowest rank of students, living on
 a stated allowance.

² To *allow* is to *approve*, in old phraseology.

Gon. Why not by the hand, sir? How have I offended?

All's not offence, that indiscretion finds,
And dotage terms so.

Lear. O sides, you are too tough!
Will you yet hold?—How came my man i' the stocks?

Corn. I set him there, sir; but his own disorders
Deserved much less advancement.¹

Lear. You! did you?

Reg. I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.²
If, till the expiration of your month,
You will return and sojourn with my sister,
Dismissing half your train, come then to me;
I am now from home, and out of that provision
Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

Lear. Return to her, and fifty men dismissed?
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose
To wage³ against the enmity o' the air;
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl,—
Necessity's sharp pinch!—Return with her?
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took
Our youngest born, I could as well be brought
To knee his throne, and, squirelike, pension beg
To keep base life afoot.—Return with her?
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter⁴
To this detested groom. [*Looking on the Steward.*

Gon. At your choice, sir.

Lear. I pr'ythee, daughter, do not make me mad;
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell.
We'll no more meet, no more see one another.—
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,
Which I must needs call mine; thou art a boil,

¹ By *less advancement*, Cornwall means that Kent's *disorders* had entitled him to a post of even less honor than the stocks.

² Since you are weak, be content to think yourself weak.

³ See p. 14, note 6, ante.

⁴ *Sumpter* is generally united with *horse* or *mule*, to signify one that carried provisions or other necessities; from *sumptus* (Lat.). In the present instance *horse* seems to be understood.

A plague-sore, an embossed¹ carbuncle,
 In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee;
 Let shame come when it will, I do not call it.
 I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
 Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove.
 Mend, when thou canst; be better at thy leisure.
 I can be patient; I can stay with Regan,
 I, and my hundred knights.

Reg. Not altogether so, sir;
 I looked not for you yet, nor am provided
 For your fit welcome. Give ear, sir, to my sister;
 For those that mingle reason with your passion,
 Must be content to think you old, and so—
 But she knows what she does.

Lear. Is this well spoken, now?

Reg. I dare avouch it, sir. What, fifty followers?
 Is it not well? What should you need of more?
 Yea, or so many? sith that both charge and danger
 Speak 'gainst so great a number? How, in one house,
 Should many people, under two commands,
 Hold amity? 'Tis hard; almost impossible.

Gon. Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance
 From those that she calls servants, or from mine?

Reg. Why not, my lord? If then they chanced to
 slack you,
 We could control them. If you will come to me,
 (For now I spy a danger,) I entreat you
 To bring but five-and-twenty; to no more
 Will I give place or notice.

Lear. I gave you all—

Reg. And in good time you gave it.

Lear. Made you my guardians, my depositaries;
 But kept a reservation to be followed
 With such a number. What, must I come to you
 With five-and-twenty, Regan? said you so?

Reg. And speak it again, my lord; no more with
 me.

¹ *Embossed* here means *swelling, protuberant*.

Lear. Those wicked creatures yet do look well favored,
When others are more wicked ; not being the worst,
Stands in some rank of praise : ¹—I'll go with thee ;

[*To GONERIL.*

Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty,
And thou art twice her love.

Gon. Hear me, my lord ;
What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five,
To follow in a house, where twice so many
Have a command to tend you ?

Reg. What need one ?

Lear. O, reason not the need ; our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous ;
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life is cheap ² as beast's. Thou art a lady ;
If only to go warm were gorgeous,
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
Which scarcely keeps thee warm.—But, for true need,—
You Heavens give me that patience, patience I need !
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age ; wretched in both !
If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely ; touch me with noble anger !
O, let not women's weapons, water-drops,
Stain my man's cheeks !—No, you unnatural hags,
I will have such revenges on you both,
That all the world shall—I will do such things,—
What they are, yet I know not ; but they shall be
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep ;
No, I'll not weep.—

I have full cause of weeping ; but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,³
Or ere I'll weep.—O fool, I shall go mad !

[*Exeunt* LEAR, GLOSTER, KENT, and Fool.

¹ i. e. to be not the worst deserves some praise.

² *As cheap* here means *as little worth*.

³ *Flaws* anciently signified *fragments*, as well as mere *cracks*. Among the Saxons it certainly had that meaning. The word, as Bailey observes, was “especially applied to the breaking off *shivers* or thin pieces from precious stones.”

Corn. Let us withdraw ; 'twill be a storm.

[*Storm heard at a distance.*]

Reg. This house
Is little ; the old man and his people cannot
Be well bestowed.

Gon. 'Tis his own blame hath put
Himself from rest, and must needs taste his folly.

Reg. For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,
But not one follower.

Gon. So am I purposed.
Where is my lord of Gloster ?

Re-enter GLOSTER.

Corn. Followed the old man forth ;—he is returned.

Glo. The king is in high rage.

Corn. Whither is he going ?

Glo. He calls to horse ; but will I know not
whither.

Corn. 'Tis best to give him way ; he leads himself.

Gon. My lord, entreat him by no means to stay.

Glo. Alack, the night comes on, and the bleak
winds

Do sorely ruffle ;¹ for many miles about
There's scarce a bush.

Reg. O sir, to wilful men,
The injuries that they themselves procure,
Must be their schoolmasters. Shut up your doors ;
He is attended with a desperate train ;
And what they may incense² him to, being apt
To have his ear abused, wisdom bids fear.

Corn. Shut up your doors, my lord ; 'tis a wild
night.

My Regan counsels well ; come out o' the storm.

[*Exeunt.*]

¹ Thus the folio. The quartos read, "Do sorely *rustle*," i. e. rustle.
But *ruffle* is most probably the true reading.

² To *incense* is here, as in other places, to *instigate*.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *A Heath. A storm is heard, with thunder and lightning.*

Enter KENT, and a Gentleman, meeting.

Kent. Who's here, beside foul weather ?

Gent. One minded like the weather, most unquietly.

Kent. I know you ; where's the king ?

Gent. Contending with the fretful element ;
Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,
Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main,¹
That things might change, or cease ;² tears his white
hair ;

Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,
Catch in their fury, and make nothing of ;
Strives in his little world of man to outscorn³
The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.
This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear⁴ would couch,
The lion and the belly-pinched wolf
Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,
And bids what will take all.⁵

Kent. But who is with him ?

Gent. None but the fool ; who labors to outjest
His heart-struck injuries.

Kent. Sir, I do know you ;
And dare, upon the warrant of my art,⁶
Commend a dear thing to you. There is division,

¹ The *main* seems to signify here the *main land*, the continent.

² The first folio ends this speech at "*change or cease*," and begins again at Kent's speech, "*But who is with him ?*"

³ Steevens thinks that we should read "*out-storm*."

⁴ That is, a bear whose dugs are drawn dry by its young.

⁵ So in Antony and Cleopatra, Enobarbus says :—

"I'll strike, and cry, *Take all*."

⁶ i. e. on the strength of that *art* or skill which teaches us "to find the *mind's construction in the face*." The folio reads :—

"—— upon the warrant of my *note* ;"

which Dr. Johnson explains, "my observation of your character."

Although as yet the face of it be covered
 With mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and Cornwall;
 Who have (as who have not, that their great stars¹
 Throned and set high?) servants, who seem no less;
 Which are to France the spies and speculations
 Intelligent of our state; what hath been seen,
 Either in snuffs and packings² of the dukes;
 Or the hard rein which both of them have borne
 Against the old kind king; or something deeper,
 Whereof, perchance, these are but furnishings:—³
 [But, true it is, from France there comes a power
 Into this scattered kingdom; who already
 Wise in our negligence, have secret feet
 In some of our best ports, and are at point
 To show their open banner.—Now to you.
 If on my credit you dare build so far
 To make your speed to Dover, you shall find
 Some that will thank you, making just report
 Of how unnatural and bemaddening sorrow
 The king hath cause to plain.
 I am a gentleman of blood and breeding;
 And from some knowledge and assurance, offer
 This office to you.]

Gent. I will talk further with you.

Kent.

No, do not.

For confirmation that I am much more
 Than my out-wall, open this purse, and take
 What it contains. If you shall see Cordelia,
 (As fear not but you shall,) show her this ring,
 And she will tell you who your fellow⁴ is,

¹ This and the seven following lines are not in the quartos. The lines in crotchets lower down, from "But, true it is," &c. to the end of the speech, are not in the folio. So that if the speech be read with omission of the former, it will stand according to the first edition; and if the former lines are read, and the latter omitted, it will then stand according to the second. The second edition is generally best, and was probably nearest to Shakespeare's last copy; but in this speech the first is preferable; for in the folio the messenger is sent, he knows not why, he knows not whither.

² *Snuffs* are dislikes, and *packings* underhand contrivances.

³ A *furnish* anciently signified a *sample*. "To lend the world a *furnish* of wit, she lays her own out to pawn."—*Green's Groatsworth of Wit*.

⁴ Companion.

That yet you do not know, Fie on this storm.
I will go seek the king.

Gent. Give me your hand; have you no more to say?

Kent. Few words, but to effect, more than all yet;
That when we have found the king, (in which your pain
That way; I'll this;) he that first lights on him,
Holla the other.¹ [Exeunt severally.

SCENE II. *Another Part of the Heath. Storm
continues.*

Enter LEAR and Fool.

Lear. Blow, wind, and crack your cheeks! rage!
blow!

You cataracts, and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drowned the cocks!
You sulphurous and thought-executing² fires,
Vaunt-couriers³ to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o' the world!
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once,
That make ingrateful man!

Fool. O nuncle, court holy-water⁴ in a dry house is
better than this rain-water out o' door. Good nuncle,
in, and ask thy daughter's blessing! Here's a night
pities neither wise men nor fools.

Lear. Rumble thy bellyful! Spit fire! spout rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters.
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;

¹ The quartos read:

"That when we have found the King,
I'll this way, you that; he that first lights
On him, hollow the other."

² *Thought-executing*, "doing execution with celerity equal to thought."

³ *Avant-couriers* (Fr.). The phrase occurs in other writers of Shakespeare's time. It originally meant the foremost scouts of an army.

⁴ *Court holy-water* is fair words and flattering speeches. The French have their *Eau benite de la cour* in the same sense.

I never gave you kingdom, called you children ;
 You owe me no subscription ;¹ why, then let fall
 Your horrible pleasure ; here I stand, your slave,
 A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man.—
 But yet I call you servile ministers,
 That have with two pernicious daughters joined
 Your high-engendered battles, 'gainst a head
 So old and white as this. O ! O ! tis foul !

Fool. He that has a house to put his head in, has a good head-piece.

*The cod-piece that will house,
 Before the head has any,
 The head and he shall louse ;—
 So beggars marry many.
 The man that makes his toe
 What he his heart should make,
 Shall of a corn cry woe,
 And turn his sleep to wake.*

—for there was never yet fair woman, but she made mouths in a glass.

Enter KENT.

Lear. No, I will be the pattern of all patience,
 I will say nothing.

Kent. Who's there ?

Fool. Marry, here's grace, and a cod-piece ;² that's a wise man, and a fool.

Kent. Alas, sir, are you here ? Things that love night,
 Love not such nights as these ; the wrathful skies
 Gallow³ the very wanderers of the dark,
 And make them keep their caves. Since I was man,
 Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
 Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never

¹ i. e. *submission*, obedience.

² Meaning the king and himself. The king's *grace* was the usual expression in Shakspeare's time.

³ To *gallow* is to *frighten*, to *scare*.

Remember to have heard ; man's nature cannot carry
The affliction, nor the fear.

Lear. Let the great gods,
That keep this dreadful pother¹ o'er our heads,
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipped of justice ! Hide thee, thou bloody hand ;
Thou perjured, and thou simular² man of virtue,
That art incestuous ! Caitiff, to pieces shake,
That under covert and convenient seeming,
Hast practised on man's life !—Close pent-up guilts,
Rive your concealing continents,³ and cry
These dreadful summoners grace.⁴ I am a man
More sinned against than sinning.

Kent. Alack, bare-headed !
Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel ;
Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest.
Repose you there ; while I to this hard house
(More hard than is the stone whereof 'tis raised ;
Which even but now, demanding after you,
Denied me to come in) return, and force
Their scantred courtesy.

Lear. My wits begin to turn.—
Come on, my boy. How dost, my boy ? Art cold ?
I am cold myself.—Where is this straw, my fellow ?
The art of our necessities is strange,
That can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel ;
Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee.⁵

Fool. *He that has a little tiny wit,—
With a heigh, ho, the wind and the rain,—
Must make content with his fortunes fit ;
For the rain it raineth every day.*⁶

¹ Thus the folio and one of the quartos ; the other quarto reads *summing*.

² *i. e.* counterfeit.

³ Continent for that which contains or incloses.

⁴ Summoners are officers that summon offenders before a proper tribunal.

⁵ The quartos read, " That sorrows yet for thee."

⁶ Part of the Clown's song at the end of Twelfth Night.

Lear. True, my good boy.—Come, bring us to this hovel. [*Exeunt LEAR and KENT.*]

Fool. This is a brave night to cool a courtesan.¹

I'll speak a prophecy ere I go :

When priests are more in word than matter ;

When brewers mar their malt with water ;

When nobles are their tailors' tutors ;

No heretics burned, but wenches' suitors ;

When every case in law is right ;

No squire in debt, nor no poor knight ;

When slanders do not live in tongues ;

Nor cutpurses come not to throngs ;

When usurers tell their gold i' the field ;

And bawds and whores do churches build ;—

Then shall the realm of Albion

Come to great confusion.²

Then comes the time, who lives to see't,

That going shall be used with feet.

This prophecy Merlin shall make ; for I live before his time. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III. *A Room in Gloster's Castle.*

Enter GLOSTER and EDMUND.

Glo. Alack, alack, Edmund, I like not this unnatural dealing. When I desired their leave that I might pity him, they took from me the use of mine own house ; charged me, on pain of their perpetual displeasure, neither to speak of him, entreat for him, nor any way sustain him.

Edm. Most savage, and unnatural !

Glo. Go to ; say you nothing. There is division between the dukes ; and a worse matter than that. I have received a letter this night ;—'tis dangerous to be spoken.—I have locked the letter in my closet. These

¹ This speech is not in the quartos.

² These lines are taken from what is commonly called Chaucer's Prophecy ; but which is much older than his time in its original form. See the Works of Chaucer, in Whittingham's edit. vol. v. p. 179.

injuries the king now bears will be revenged at home ; there is part of a power already footed :¹ we must incline to the king. I will seek him, and privily relieve him ; go you, and maintain talk with the duke, that my charity be not of him perceived. If he ask for me, I am ill and gone to bed. If I die for it, as no less is threatened me, the king my old master must be relieved. There is some strange thing toward, Edmund ; pray you, be careful. *[Exit.]*

Edm. This courtesy, forbid thee, shall the duke Instantly know ; and of that letter too.—
This seems a fair deserving, and must draw me
That which my father loses ; no less than all :
The younger rises, when the old doth fall. *[Exit.]*

SCENE IV. *A Part of the Heath, with a Hovel.*

Enter LEAR, KENT, and Fool.

Kent. Here is the place, my lord ; good my lord,
enter.

The tyranny of the open night's too rough
For nature to endure. *[Storm still.]*

Lear. Let me alone.

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

Lear. Wilt break my heart ?

Kent. I'd rather break mine own. Good my lord,
enter.

Lear. Thou think'st 'tis much, that this contentious
storm

Invades us to the skin : so 'tis to thee ;
But where the greater malady is fixed,
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'dst shun a bear ;
But if thy flight lay toward the raging sea,
Thou'dst meet the bear i' the mouth. When the
mind's free,
The body's delicate ; the tempest in my mind

¹ The quartos read *landed*.

Doth from my senses take all feeling else,
 Save what beats there.—Filial ingratitude!
 Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand,
 For lifting food to't?—But I will punish home:—
 No, I will weep no more.—In such a night
 To shut me out!—Pour on; I will endure.¹—
 In such a night as this! O Regan, Goneril!—
 Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave you all—
 O, that way madness lies; let me shun that;
 No more of that.—

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

Lear. 'Pr'ythee, go in thyself; seek thine own ease;
 This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
 On things would hurt me more.—But I'll go in.
 In, boy: go first.—[*To the Fool.*] You houseless²
 poverty,—
 Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.—

[*Fool goes in.*]

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
 That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
 How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
 Your looped and windowed raggedness,³ defend you
 From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
 Too little care of this. Take physic, pomp;
 Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel;
 That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
 And show the Heavens more just.

Edg. [*Within.*] Fathom and half, fathom and half!
 Poor Tom!⁴

[*The Fool runs out from the hovel.*]

Fool. Come not in here, nuncle, here's a spirit.
 Help me, help me!

Kent. Give me thy hand.—Who's there?

Fool. A spirit, a spirit; he says his name's poor
 Tom.

¹ This line is omitted in the quartos.

² This and the next line are only in the folio.

³ *Looped and windowed* is full of *holes* and *apertures*.

⁴ This speech of Edgar's is omitted in the quartos.—He gives the sign used by those who are sounding the depth at sea.

Kent. What art thou that dost grumble there i' the straw?

Come forth.

Enter EDGAR, disguised as a madman.

Edg. Away! the foul fiend follows me :—
Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind.—
Humph! go to thy cold bed, and warm thee.

Lear. Hast thou given all to thy two daughters?
And art thou come to this?

Edg. Who gives any thing to poor Tom? whom
the foul fiend hath led through fire and through flame,
through ford and whirlpool, over bog and quagmire,
that hath laid knives under his pillow, and halters in
his paw; set ratsbane by his porridge; made him
proud of heart, to ride on a bay trotting-horse over
four-inched bridges, to course his own shadow for a
traitor.—Bless thy five wits!¹ Tom's a-cold.—O, do de,
do de, do de.—Bless thee from whirlwinds, star-blasting,
and taking!² Do poor Tom some charity, whom the
foul fiend vexes. There could I have him now,—and
there,—and there, and there again, and there.

[*Storm continues.*

Lear. What, have his daughters brought him to this
pass?—

Couldst thou save nothing? Did'st thou give them all?

Fool. Nay, he reserved a blanket, else we had been
all ashamed.

Lear. Now, all the plagues that in the pendulous air
Hang fated o'er men's faults, light on thy daughters!

Kent. He hath no daughters, sir.

Lear. Death, traitor! nothing could have subdued
nature

To such a lowness, but his unkind daughters.—
Is it the fashion that discarded fathers

¹ It has been before observed, that the *wits* seem to have been reckoned
five by analogy to the five senses.

² To take is to blast, or strike with malignant influence.

Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?
Judicious punishment! 'twas this flesh begot
Those pelican daughters.¹

Edg. Pillicock² sat on pillicock's-hill;—
Halloo, halloo, loo, loo!

Fool. This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen.

Edg. Take heed o' the foul fiend; obey thy parents;
keep thy word justly; swear not; commit not with
man's sworn spouse; set not thy sweet heart on proud
array: Tom's a-cold.

Lear. What hast thou been?

Edg. A serving-man, proud in heart and mind;
that curled my hair;³ wore gloves in my cap;⁴ served
the lust of my mistress's heart, and did the act of
darkness with her; swore as many oaths as I spake
words, and broke them in the sweet face of heaven;
one that slept in the contriving of lust, and waked
to do it. Wine loved I deeply; dice dearly; and in
woman, out-paramoured the Turk. False of heart,
light of ear,⁵ bloody of hand; hog in sloth, fox in
stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in
prey. Let not the creaking of shoes, nor the rustling
of silks, betray thy poor heart to women. Keep thy
foot out of brothels, thy hand out of plackets, thy pen
from lenders' books, and defy the foul fiend.—Still
through the hawthorn blows the cold wind: says suum,

¹ The young pelican is fabled to suck the mother's blood. The allusions to this fable are very numerous in old writers.

² It should be observed, that *Killico* is one of the devils mentioned in Harsnet's Declaration of Popish Impostures. The inquisitive reader may find a further explanation of this word in Minsheu's Dictionary, art. 9299; and Chalmers's Works of Sir David Lindsay, Glossary, v. *pillock*.

³ "Then Ma. Mainy, by the instigation of the first of the seven, [spirits,] began to set his hands unto his side, *curled his hair*, and used such gestures as Ma. Edmunds [the exorcist] presently affirmed that that spirit was *Pride*." *Harsnet's Declaration*, &c. 1603. Before each sin was cast out, Mainy, by gestures, acted that particular sin—curling his hair, to show pride, &c. &c.

⁴ It was anciently the custom to wear *gloves* in the hat on three distinct occasions, viz. as the favor of a mistress, the memorial of a friend, and as a mark to be challenged by an enemy.

⁵ Credulous of evil, ready to receive malicious reports.

mun, ha no nonny, dolphin my boy, my boy, sessa :
let him trot by.¹ [*Storm still continues.*

Lear. Why, thou were better in thy grave, than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies.—Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou owest the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume.—Ha! here's three of us are sophisticated!—Thou art the thing itself;—unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art.—Off, off, you lendings.—Come; unbutton here.² [*Tearing off his clothes.*

Fool. 'Pr'ythee, nuncle, be contented; this is a naughty³ night to swim in.—Now a little fire in a wild field were like an old lecher's heart; a small spark, all the rest of his body cold.—Look, here comes a walking fire.

Edg. This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet;⁴ he

¹ "Dolphin my boy, my boy,
Cease, let him trot by;
It seemeth not that such a foe
From me or you would fly."

This is a stanza from a very old ballad, written on some battle fought in France; during which the king (unwilling to put the suspected valor of his son, the *dauphin*, to the trial), as different champions cross the field, always discovers some objection to his attacking each of them, and repeats the two first lines as every fresh personage is introduced; and at last assists in propping up a dead body against a tree for him to try his manhood upon. Steevens had this account from an old gentleman, who was only able to report part of the ballad. In Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, Cokes cries out, "God's my life! He shall be dauphin, my boy!" "*Hey nonny nonny*" is merely the burden of another ballad.

² The words *unbutton here* are only in the folio. The quartos read, *Come on, be true.*

³ *Naughty* signifies *bad, unfit, improper*. This epithet was formerly employed on serious occasions.

⁴ The name of this fiend, though so grotesque, was not invented by Shakespeare, but by those who wished to impose upon their hearers the belief of his actual existence; this, and most of the fiends mentioned by Edgar, being to be found in bishop Harsnet's book, among those which the Jesuits, about the time of the Spanish invasion, pretended to cast out, for the purpose of making converts. The principal scene of this farce was laid in the family of Mr. Edmund Peckham, a Catholic. Harsnet published his account of the detection of the imposture, by order of the privy council. "*Frateretto, Fliberdigibet, Hoberdidance, Tocobatto*, were four devils of the round or morrice.—These four had forty assistants under them, as themselves doe confesse. Flebergibbe is

begins at curfew, and walks till the first cock; he gives the web and the pin,¹ squints the eye, and makes the hare-lip; mildews the white wheat, and hurts the poor creature of earth.

*Saint Withold footed thrice the wold;²
He met the night-mare, and her nine-fold,
Bid her alight,
And her troth plight,
And, Aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!³*

Kent. How fares your grace?

Enter GLOSTER, with a torch.

Lear. What's he?

Kent. Who's there? What is't you seek?

Glo. What are you there? Your names?

Edg. Poor Tom; that eats the swimming frog, the toad, the tadpole, the wall-newt and the water;⁴ that in the fury of the heart, when the foul fiend rages, eats cow-dung for sallets; swallows the old rat, and the ditch-dog; drinks the green mantle of the standing pool; who is whipped from tithing to tithing, and stocked, punished, and imprisoned; who hath had three suits to his back, six shirts to his body, horse to ride, and weapon to wear,—

*But mice and rats, and such small deer,
Have been Tom's food for seven long year.⁵*

used by Latimer for a sycophant; and Cotgrave explains *Coquette* by a *Flebergibet* or Titifill."

It was an old tradition that spirits were relieved from the confinement in which they were held during the day, at the time of curfew, that is, at the close of the day, and were permitted to wander at large till the first cock-crowing. Hence, in *The Tempest*, they are said to "rejoice to hear the solemn curfew."

¹ The *pin* and *web* is a disease of the eyes resembling the cataract in an imperfect stage.

² About *St. Withold* we have no certainty. This adventure is not found in the common legends of *St. Vitais*, whom Mr. Tyrwhitt thought was meant.

³ See *Macbeth*.

⁴ i. e. and the water-newt.

⁵ In the metrical Romance of *Sir Bevis*, who was confined seven years in a dungeon, it is said that

"Rattes and mice, and such smal dere,
Was his meat that seven yere."

Beware my follower. Peace, Smolkin;¹ peace, thou fiend!

Glo. What, hath your grace no better company?

Edg. The prince of darkness is a gentleman;
Moth he's called, and Mahu.¹

Glo. Our flesh and blood, my lord, is grown so vile,
That it doth hate what gets it.

Edg. Poor Tom's a-cold.

Glo. Go in with me; my duty cannot suffer
To obey in all your daughters' hard commands.
Though their injunction be to bar my doors,
And let this tyrannous night take hold upon you,
Yet have I ventured to come to seek you out,
And bring you where both fire and food is ready.

Lear. First let me talk with this philosopher.—
What is the cause of thunder?

Kent. Good my lord, take his offer;
Go into the house.

Lear. I'll talk a word with this same learned
Theban.

What is your study?

Edg. How to prevent the fiend, and to kill vermin.

Lear. Let me ask you one word in private.

Kent. Impertune him once more to go, my lord;
His wits begin to unsettle.²

¹ "The names of other punie spirits cast out of Twyford were these:—Hilco, *Smolkin*, Hillio," &c.—*Harmet's Detection*, &c. p. 49. Again, "*Maho* was the chief devil that had possession of Sarah Williams; but another of the possessed, named Richard Mainy, was molested by a still more considerable fiend, called *Modu*," p. 268; where the said Richard Mainy deposes:—"Furthermore it is pretended, that there remaineth still in mee the prince of devils, whose name should be *Modu*." And, p. 269:—"When the said priests had despatched their business at Hackney (where they had been exorcising Sarah Williams), they then returned towards mee, upon pretence to cast the great prince *Modu* out of mee."

In the *Goblins*, by sir John Suckling, a catch is introduced, which concludes with these two lines:—

"The prince of darkness is a gentleman;
Mahu, Mahu is his name."

This catch may not be the production of Suckling, but the original referred to by Edgar's speech.

² Lord Orford has the following remark in the postscript to his *Mysterious Mother*:—"The finest picture ever drawn of a head discomposed by misfortune is that of king Lear. His thoughts dwell on the ingrati-

Glo. Canst thou blame him?
 His daughters seek his death.—Ah, that good Kent!—
 He said it would be thus;—poor banished man!—
 Thou say'st, the king grows mad; I'll tell thee, friend,
 I am almost mad myself. I had a son,
 Now outlawed from my blood; he sought my life,
 But lately, very late; I loved him, friend,—
 No father his son dearer: true to tell thee,

[*Storm continues.*]

The grief hath crazed my wits.—What a night's this!
 I do beseech your grace,——

Lear. O, cry you mercy,
 Noble philosopher, your company.

Edg. Tom's a-cold.

Glo. In, fellow, there, to the hovel; keep thee warm.

Lear. Come, let's in all.

Kent. This way, my lord.

Lear. With him;
 I will keep still with my philosopher.

Kent. Good my lord, soothe him; let him take the fellow.

Glo. Take him you on.

Kent. Sirrah, come on; go along with us.

Lear. Come, good Athenian.

Glo. No words, no words.
 Hush.

Edg. *Child Rowland*¹ to the dark tower came,
 His word was still,—*Fie, foh, and fum,*
I smell the blood of a British man. [Exeunt.]

tude of his daughters, and every sentence that falls from his wildness excites reflection and pity. Had frenzy entirely seized him, our compassion would abate; we should conclude that he no longer felt unhappiness."

¹ Capel observes, that *Child Rowland* means the knight *Orlando*. He would read *come*, with the quartos, absolutely (*Orlando being come to the dark tower*); and supposes a line to be lost, "which spoke of some giant, the inhabitant of that tower, and the smeller-out of *Child Rowland*, who comes to encounter him." He proposes to fill up the passage thus:—

"*Child Rowland to the dark tower come,*
 [*The giant roared, and out he ran;*]
 His word was still," &c.

Part of this is to be found in the second part of *Jack and the Giants*,

SCENE V. *A Room in Gloster's Castle.*

Enter CORNWALL and EDMUND.

Corn. I will have my revenge ere I depart this house.

Edm. How, my lord, I may be censured, that nature thus gives way to loyalty, something fears me to think of.

Corn. I now perceive it was not altogether your brother's evil disposition made him seek his death; but a provoking merit,¹ set a-work by a reprobable badness in himself.

Edm. How malicious is my fortune, that I must repent to be just! This is the letter he spoke of, which approves him an intelligent party to the advantages of France. O Heavens! that this treason were not, or not I the detector!

Corn. Go with me to the duchess.

Edm. If the matter of this paper be certain, you have mighty business in hand.

Corn. True or false, it hath made thee earl of Gloster. Seek out where thy father is, that he may be ready for our apprehension.

Edm. [*Aside.*] If I find him comforting the king, it will stuff his suspicion more fully.—I will persevere in my course of loyalty, though the conflict be sore between that and my blood.

Corn. I will lay trust upon thee; and thou shalt find a dearer father in my love. [*Exeunt.*]

which, if not as old as the time of Shakspeare, may have been compiled from something that was so: they are uttered by a giant:—

"*Fee, faw, fum,*
I smell the blood of an Englishman;
Be he alive, or be he dead,
I'll grind his bones to make my bread."

¹ Cornwall seems to mean the merit of Edmund; which, being noticed by Gloster, provoked or instigated Edgar to seek his father's death.

SCENE VI. *A Chamber in a Farm-House, adjoining the Castle.*

Enter GLOSTER, LEAR, KENT, Fool, and EDGAR.

Glo. Here is better than the open air; take it thankfully. I will piece out the comfort with what addition I can; I will not be long from you..

Kent. All the power of his wits has given way to his impatience.—The gods reward your kindness!

[*Exit GLOSTER.*]

Edg. Frateretto¹ calls me; and tells me Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness. Pray, innocent,² and beware the foul fiend.

Fool. 'Pr'ythee, nuncle, tell me, whether a madman be a gentleman, or a yeoman?

Lear. A king, a king!

Fool. No; he's a yeoman that has a gentleman to his son; for he's a mad yeoman that sees his son a gentleman before him.

Lear. To have a thousand with red burning spits Come hissing³ in upon them:—

Edg. The foul fiend bites my back.⁴

Fool. He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's heels,⁵ a boy's love, or a whore's oath.

Lear. It shall be done; I will arraign them straight. Come, sit thou here, most learned justicer;⁶—

[*To EDGAR.*]

¹ Rabelais says that Nero was a fiddler in hell, and Trajan an angler.

² Perhaps he is here addressing the *fool*. Fools were anciently termed *innocents*.

³ The old copies have *hizzing*, which Malone changed to *whizzing*. One of the quartos spells the word *hizzing*, which indicates that the reading of the present text is right.

⁴ This and the next thirteen speeches are only in the quartos.

⁵ The old copies read, "a horse's *health*;" but *heels* was certainly meant. "*Trust not a horse's heels, nor a dog's tooth*," is a proverb in Ray's Collection; which may be traced at least as far back as the time of our Edward II.

⁶ *Justicer*, from *justiciarius*, was the old term, as we learn from Lambard's *Eirenarcha*.

Thou, sapient sir, sit herè. [*To the Fool.*—Now, you she-foxes!—

Edg. Look, where he stands and glares!—
Wantest thou eyes at trial, madam?¹

Come o'er the bourn,² Bessy to me.—

Fool. Her boat hath a leak,

And she must not speak

Why she dares not come over to thee.

Edg. The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of a nightingale. *Hopdance* cries in Tom's belly³ for two white herrings. Croak not, black angel; I have no food for thee.

Kent. How do you, sir? Stand you not so amazed. Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?

Lear. I'll see their trial first.—Bring in the evidence.—

Thou robed man of justice, take thy place;

And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity, [*To EDGAR.*
Bench by his side.—You are of the commission, [*To the Fool.*
Sit you too. [*To KENT.*

¹ "Wantest thou eyes at trial, madam?" is a question addressed to some visionary spectator, and may mean no more than "Do you want eyes when you should use them most? that you cannot see this spectre."

² A *boorn* is a *brook* or *rivulet*. At the beginning of *A Very Mery and Pythie Comedie*, called the *Longer Thou Livest The More Fool Thou Art*, &c. blk. let., no date:—"Entreth Moros, counterfaiting a vain gesture and foolish countenance, synging the foote of many songs, as holes were wont;" and among them is this passage:—

"Com over the boorne Bessé,
My litle pretie Bessé,
Come over the boorne, Bessé, to me."

The old copies read, "o'er the broome;" and Johnson suggested, as there was no connection between a boat and a broom, that it was an error. Stevens made the correction, and adduced this illustration. There is peculiar propriety in this address: Bessy and poor Tom usually travelled together, as appears by a passage cited from *Dick Whipper's Sessions*, 1607, by Malone. Mad women, who travel about the country, are called, in Shropshire, *Cousin Betties*, and elsewhere, *Mad Bessies*.

³ Much of this may have been suggested by Harsnet's book. *Hoberdiance* is mentioned in a former note. "One time shee remembereth that, shee having the said croaking in her belly, they said it was the devil that was about the bed, that spake with the voice of a toad," p. 194, 195, &c.

Edg. Let us deal justly.

*Sleepest, or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?
Thy sheep be in the corn;
And for one blast of thy minikin¹ mouth,
Thy sheep shall take no harm.*

Pur! the cat is gray.

Lear. Arraign her first; 'tis Goneril. I here take my oath before this honorable assembly, she kicked the poor king her father.

Fool. Come hither, mistress. Is your name Goneril?

Lear. She cannot deny it.

Fool. Cry you mercy, I took you for a jointstool.²

Lear. And here's another, whose warped looks proclaim

What store her heart is made of.—Stop her there!

Arms, arms, sword, fire!—Corruption in the place!

False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape?

Edg. Bless thy five wits!

Kent. O pity!—Sir, where is the patience now, That you so oft have boasted to retain?

Edg. My tears begin to take his part so much, They'll mar my counterfeiting. [*Aside.*

Lear. The little dogs and all, Tray, Blanch, and Sweet-heart, see, they bark at me.

Edg. Tom will throw his head at them.—
Avaunt, you curs!

Be thy mouth or black or white,
Tooth that poisons if it bite;
Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,
Hound, or spaniel, brach, or lym;³
Or bobtail tike,⁴ or trundle-tail;
Tom will make them weep and wail;

¹ *Minikin* was anciently a term of endearment.—Baret, in his *Alvearie*, interprets *feat* by “proper, well-fashioned, *minikin*, handsome.”

² This proverbial expression occurs likewise in Lyly's *Mother Bombe*, 1594.

³ A *lym* or *lyme* was a blood-hound (see *Minshew's Dict. in voce*); sometimes also called a *limmer* or *leamer*; from the *leam* or *leash*, in which he was held till he was let slip.

⁴ *Tyjk* is the Rynic word for a little worthless dog. *Trindletails* are

For, with throwing thus my head,
 Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled.
 "Do de, de do." Sessa.¹ Come, march to wakes and
 fairs, and market towns.—Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.²

Lear. Then let them anatomize Regan, see what
 breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature,
 that makes these hard hearts?—You, sir, I entertain
 you for one of my hundred; only I do not like the
 fashion of your garments. You will say they are Per-
 sian attire; but let them be changed. [*To EDGAR.*

Kent. Now, good my lord, lie here, and rest awhile.³

Lear. Make no noise, make no noise; draw the
 curtains. So, so, so. We'll go to supper i' the morn-
 ing. So, so, so.

Fool. And I'll go to bed at noon.

Re-enter GLOSTER.

Glo. Come hither, friend; where is the king my
 master?

Kent. Here, sir; but trouble him not, his wits are
 gone.

Glo. Good friend, I pr'ythee take him in thy arms;
 I have o'erheard a plot of death upon him.

There is a litter ready; lay him in't,
 And drive towards Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet
 Both welcome and protection. Take up thy master.
 If thou shouldst dally half an hour, his life,
 With thine, and all that offer to defend him,
 Stand in assured loss. Take up, take up;⁴

mentioned in *The Booke of Huntyng, &c.*, blk. let., no date; and in the
 old comedy of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*.

¹ *Sessa*; this word occurs before in the fourth scene of this act. It
 is spelled *sessey* in both places in the old copy. The same word occurs
 in the Induction to the *Taming of the Shrew*, where it is spelled *sesa*; it
 appears to have been a corruption of *cessez*, *stop* or *hold*, be quiet, have
 done.

² A *horn* was usually carried about by every Tom of Bedlam, to receive
 such drink as the charitable might afford him, with whatever scraps of
 food they might give him.

³ i. e. on the cushions to which he points.

⁴ One of the quartos reads, "Take up *the king*;" the other, "Take up
 to keep," &c.

And follow me, that will to some provision
Give thee quick conduct.

[*Kent.* Oppressed nature sleeps.¹—
This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken senses,
Which, if convenience will not allow,
Stand in hard cure.—Come, help to bear thy master;
Thou must not stay behind. [*To the Fool.*

Glo. Come, come, away.

[*Exeunt KENT, GLOSTER, and the Fool, bearing off the King.*

Edg. When we our betters see bearing our woes,
We scarcely think our miseries our foes.
Who alone suffers, suffers most i' the mind;
Leaving free things, and happy shows, behind:
But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip,
When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.
How light and portable my pain seems now,
When that which makes me bend, makes the king
bow;

He childed, as I fathered!—Tom, away!
Mark the high noises,² and thyself bewray,³
When false opinion, whose wrong thought defiles thee,
In thy just proof, repeals, and reconciles thee.
What will hap more to-night, safe scape the king!
Lurk, lurk.] [*Exit.*

SCENE VII. *A Room in Gloster's Castle.*

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GONERIL, EDMUND, and Servants.

Corn. Post speedily to my lord your husband; show him this letter;—the army of France is landed.—Seek out the villain Gloster. [*Exeunt some of the Servants.*

¹ These two concluding speeches, by Kent and Edgar, are restored from the quarto.

² The great events that are approaching, the loud tumult of approaching war.

³ Betray, discover. ß

Reg. Hang him instantly.

Gon. Pluck out his eyes.

Corn. Leave him to my displeasure.—Edmund, keep you our sister company; the revenges we are bound to take upon your traitorous father, are not fit for your beholding. Advise the duke, where you are going, to a most festinate preparation; we are bound to the like. Our post shall be swift, and intelligent betwixt us. Farewell, dear sister;—farewell, my lord of Gloster.¹

Enter Steward.

How now? Where's the king?

Stew. My lord of Gloster hath conveyed him hence. Some five or six and thirty of his knights, Hot questrists² after him, met him at gate; Who, with some other of the lord's dependants, Are gone with him towards Dover; where they boast To have well-armed friends.

Corn. Get horses for your mistress.

Gon. Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.

[*Exeunt GONERIL and EDMUND.*

Corn. Edmund, farewell.—Go, seek the traitor Gloster,

Pinion him like a thief; bring him before us.

[*Exeunt other Servants.*

Though well we may not pass upon his life
Without the form of justice, yet our power
Shall do a courtesy³ to our wrath, which men
May blame, but not control. Who's there? the traitor?

Re-enter Servants, with GLOSTER.

Reg. Ingrateful fox! 'tis he.

Corn. Bind fast his corky⁴ arms.

¹ Meaning Edmund, invested with his father's titles.

² A *questrist* is one who goes in *quest* or search of another.

³ "Do a courtesy to our wrath," simply means *bend* to our wrath, as a courtesy is made by bending the body.

⁴ i. e. *dry, withered, husky* arms. This epithet was, perhaps, borrowed from Harsnet:—"It would pose all the cunning exorcists that are this

Glo. What mean your graces?—Good my friends, consider

You are my guests; do me no foul play, friends.

Corn. Bind him, I say. [Servants bind him.]

Reg. Hard, hard.—O filthy traitor!

Glo. Unmerciful lady as you are, I am none.

Corn. To this chair bind him.—Villain, thou shalt find—— [REGAN plucks his beard.]

Glo. By the kind gods, 'tis most ignobly done, To pluck me by the beard.

Reg. So white, and such a traitor!

Glo. Naughty lady,

These hairs, which thou dost ravish from my chin,

Will quicken, and accuse thee. I am your host;

With robbers' hands, my hospitable favors¹

You should not ruffle thus. What will you do?

Corn. Come, sir, what letters had you late from France?

Reg. Be simple answered, for we know the truth.

Corn. And what confederacy have you with the traitors

Late footed in the kingdom?

Reg. To whose hands have you sent the lunatic king? Speak.

Glo. I have a letter guessingly set down, Which came from one that's of a neutral heart, And not from one opposed.

Corn. Cunning.

Reg. And false.

Corn. Where hast thou sent the king?

Glo. To Dover.

Reg. Wherefore

To Dover? Wast thou not charged at peril——

Corn. Wherefore to Dover? Let him first answer that.

Glo. I am tied to the stake, and I must stand the course.

day to be found, to teach an old *corkie* woman to writhe, tumble, curvet, and fetch her morice gambols as Martha Bressier did."

¹ *Favors* mean the same as *features*.

Reg. Wherefore to Dover?

Glo. Because I would not see thy cruel nails
Pluck out his poor old eyes; nor thy fierce sister
In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.¹
The sea, with such a storm as his bare head
In hell-black night endured, would have bugged up,
And quenched the stelled² fires; yet, poor old heart,
He help the heavens to rain.
If wolves had at thy gate howled that stern³ time,
Thou shouldst have said, *Good porter, turn the key;*
All cruels else subscribed.⁴—But I shall see
The winged vengeance overtake such children.

Corn. See it shalt thou never.—Fellows, hold the
chair;
Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot.

[*GLOSTER is held down in his chair, while
CORNWALL plucks out one of his eyes, and
sets his foot on it.*

Glo. He that will think to live till he be old,
Give me some help.—O cruel! O ye gods!

Reg. One side will mock another; the other too.

Corn. If you see vengeance,—

Serv. Hold your hand, my lord.
I have served you ever since I was a child;
But better service have I never done you,
Than now to bid you hold.

Reg. How now, you dog?

Serv. If you did wear a beard upon your chin,
I'd shake it on this quarrel; what do you mean?

Corn. My villain!⁵ [*Draws, and runs at him.*

¹ The quarto reads, "*rash*, boarish fangs." To *rash* is the old hunting term for the stroke made by a wild-boar with his fangs.

² Starred.

³ Thus the folio. The quartos read, "that *dearn* time." *Dearn* is *dreary*. The reading in the text is countenanced by Chapman's version of the 24th Iliad:—

"— In this so *sterne* a time
Of night and danger."

⁴ i. e. *yielded, submitted* to the necessity of the occasion.

⁵ *Villain* is perhaps here used in its original sense, of one in servitude.

Serv. Nay, then, come on, and take the chance of anger.

[*Draws. They fight. CORN. is wounded.*]

Reg. Give me thy sword.—[*To another Serv.*] A peasant stand up thus!

[*Snatches a sword, comes behind him, and stabs him.*]

Serv. O, I am slain!—My lord, you have one eye left

To see some mischief on him.—O! [*Dies.*]

Corn. Lest it see more, prevent it.—Out, vile jelly! Where is thy lustre now?

[*Tears out GLOSTER's other eye, and throws it on the ground.*]

Glo. All dark and comfortless.—Where's my son Edmund?

Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature,
To quit¹ this horrid act.

Reg. Out, treacherous villain!
Thou call'st on him that hates thee. It was he
That made the overture of thy treason to us;
Who is too good to pity thee.

Glo. O my follies!
Then Edgar was abused.—

Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him!

Reg. Go, thrust him out at gates, and let him smell
His way to Dover.—How is't, my lord? How look
you?

Corn. I have received a hurt.—Follow me, lady.
Turn out that eyeless villain;—throw this slave
Upon the dunghill.—Regan, I bleed apace;
Untimely comes this hurt. Give me your arm.

[*Exit CORNWALL, led by REGAN;—Servants unbind GLOSTER, and lead him out.*²]

1 *Serv.* I'll never care what wickedness I do,
If this man comes to good.

2 *Serv.* If she live long,

¹ Requite.

² The residue of this act is not contained in the folio of 1623.

And, in the end, meet the old course of death,
Women will all turn monsters.

1 *Serv.* Let's follow the old earl, and get the bed-lam
To lead him where he would ; his roguish madness
Allows itself to any thing.

2 *Serv.* Go thou ; I'll fetch some flax, and whites
of eggs,
To apply to his bleeding face. Now, Heaven help
him ! *[Exeunt severally.]*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *The Heath.*

Enter EDGAR.

Edg. Yet better thus, and know to be contemned,
Than still contemned and flattered.¹ To be worst,
The lowest, and most dejected thing of fortune,
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear.
The lamentable change is from the best ;
The worst returns to laughter. Welcome, then,²
Thou unsubstantial air, that I embrace !
The wretch, that thou hast blown unto the worst,
Owes nothing to thy blasts.—But who comes here ?—

Enter GLOSTER, *led by an Old Man.*

My father, poorly led ?—World, world, O world !
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,
Life would not yield to age.³

¹ " It is better to be thus *openly* contemned, than to be flattered and secretly despised."

² The next two lines and a half are not in the quartos.

³ We should never submit with resignation to death, the necessary consequence of old age.

Old Man. O my good lord, I have been your tenant, and your father's tenant, these fourscore years.

Glo. Away, get thee away; good friend, be gone. Thy comforts can do me no good at all; Thee they may hurt.

Old Man. Alack, sir, you cannot see your way.

Glo. I have no way, and therefore want no eyes; I stumbled when I saw. Full oft 'tis seen, Our mean secures us,¹ and our mere defects Prove our commodities.—Ah, dear son Edgar, The food of thy abused father's wrath! Might I but live to see thee in my touch,² I'd say, I had eyes again!

Old Man. How now? Who's there?

Edg. [*Aside.*] O gods! who is't can say, *I am at the worst?*³

I am worse than e'er I was.

Old Man. 'Tis poor mad Tom.

Edg. [*Aside.*] And worse I may be yet. The worst is not,

So long as we can say, *This is the worst.*³

Old Man. Fellow, where goest?

Glo. Is it a beggar man?

Old Man. Madman and beggar too.

Glo. He has some reason, else he could not beg.

I' the last night's storm I such a fellow saw;
Which made me think a man a worm. My son
Came then into my mind; and yet my mind
Was then scarce friends with him. I have heard more
since;

As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods;

They kill us for their sport.

Edg. How should this be?—

Bad is the trade must play the fool to sorrow,

¹ *Mean* is here put for our *moderate* or *mean conditions*. It was sometimes the practice of the Poet's age to use the plural, when the subject spoken of related to more persons than one. To avoid the equivocation, Pope changed the reading of the old copy to "our *mean secures us*."

² So in another scene, "I see it *feelingly*."

³ i. e. while we live.

Angering itself and others. [*Aside.*]—Bless thee, master!

Glo. Is that the naked fellow?

Old Man.

Ay, my lord.

Glo. Then, 'pr'ythee, get thee gone. If, for my sake, Thou wilt o'ertake us, hence a mile or twain, I'the way to Dover, do it for ancient love; And bring some covering for this naked soul, Whom I'll entreat to lead me.

Old Man.

Alack, sir, he's mad.

Glo. 'Tis the time's plague, when madmen lead the blind.

Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure.

Above the rest, be gone.

Old Man. I'll bring him the best 'parel that I have, Come on't what will. [*Exit.*]

Glo. Sirrah, naked fellow!

Edg. Poor Tom's a-cold.—I cannot daub it further. [*Aside,*

Glo. Come hither, fellow.

Edg. [*Aside.*] And yet I must.—Bless thy sweet eyes, they bleed.

Glo. Know'st thou the way to Dover?

Edg. Both stile and gate, horse-way and foot-path. Poor Tom hath been scared out of his good wits. Bless the good man from the foul fiend! Five fiends¹ have been in poor Tom at once; of lust, as *Obidicut*; *Hobbididance*, prince of dumbness; *Mahu*, of stealing; *Modo*, of murder; and *Flibbertigibbet*, of mopping and mowing; who since possesses chambermaids and waiting-women. So, bless thee, master!

Glo. Here, take this purse, thou whom the Heaven's plagues Have humbled to all strokes; that I am wretched,

¹ "The devil in Ma. Mainy confessed his name to be *Modu*, and that he had besides himself *seven other spirits*, and all of them captaines, and of great fame. Then Edmundes, (the exorcist,) began againe with great earnestness, and all the company cried out, &c. — so as both that wicked prince *Modu* and his company might be cast out." — *Harnet*, p. 163. This passage will account for "five fiends having been in poor Tom at once."

Makes thee the happier.—Heavens, deal so still !
 Let the superfluous, and lust-dieted man,
 That slaves your ordinance,¹ that will not see
 Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly ;
 So distribution should undo excess,
 And each man have enough.—Dost thou know Dover ?

Edg. Ay, master.

Glo. There is a cliff, whose high and bending head
 Looks fearfully in² the confined deep.
 Bring me but to the very brim of it,
 And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear,
 With something rich about me. From that place
 I shall no leading need.

Edg. Give me thy arm ;
 Poor Tom shall lead thee. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II. *Before the Duke of Albany's Palace.*

Enter GONERIL and EDMUND ; Steward meeting them.

Gon. Welcome, my lord ; I marvel, our mild husband
 Not met us on the way.—Now, where's your master ?

Stew. Madam, within ; but never man so changed.
 I told him of the army that was landed ;
 He smiled at it. I told him you were coming ;
 His answer was, *The worse* : of Gloster's treachery,
 And of the loyal service of his son,
 When I informed him, then he called me sot,
 And told me I had turned the wrong side out.—
 What most he should dislike, seems pleasant to him ;
 What like, offensive.

Gon. Then shall you go no further.
 [To EDMUND.]

It is the cowish terror of his spirit,
 That dares not undertake ; he'll not feel wrongs,
 Which tie him to an answer. Our wishes, on the way,

¹ To *slave* an ordinance is to treat it as a slave, to make it subject to us, instead of acting in obedience to it. The quartos read, "That *stands* your ordinance," which may be right, says Malone, and means *withstands* or *abides*.

² *In* is here put for *on*, as in other places of these plays.

May prove effects. Back, Edmund, to my brother;
 Hasten his musters, and conduct his powers;
 I must change arms at home, and give the distaff
 Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant
 Shall pass between us: ere long you are like to hear,
 If you dare venture in your own behalf,
 A mistress's command. Wear this, spare speech;

[Giving a fan]

Decline your head: this kiss, if it durst speak,
 Would stretch thy spirits up into the air;—
 Conceive, and fare thee well.

Edm. Yours in the ranks of death.

Gon.

My most dear Gloucester!

[Exit EDMUND.]

O, the difference of man, and man!
 To thee a woman's services are due;
 My fool usurps my bed.¹

Stew.

Madam, here comes my lord.

[Exit Steward.]

Enter ALBANY.

Gon. I have been worth the whistle.²

Alb.

O Goneril!

You are not worth the dust which the rude wind
 Blows in your face—I fear your disposition.³
 That nature, which contemns its origin,
 Cannot be bordered certain in itself;
 She that herself will sliver and disbranch
 From her material sap,⁴ perforce must wither,
 And come to deadly use.⁵

¹ Quarto A. reads "my foot usurp my body;" Quarto B., "my foot usurps my head;" Quarto C., "a fool usurps my bed." The folio reads, "my fool usurps my body."

² Goneril's meaning seems to be, "There was a time when you would have thought me worth the calling to you."

³ These words, and the lines following, to *monsters of the deep*, are not in the folio. They are necessary to explain the reasons of the detestation which Albany here expresses to his wife.

⁴ "She who breaks the bonds of filial duty, and becomes wholly alienated from her father, must wither and perish, like a branch separated from that trunk or body which 'supplied it with sap.'" There is a peculiar propriety in the use of the word *material*; *materia* (Lat.) signifying the trunk or body of the tree.

⁵ Alluding to the use that witches and enchanters are said to make of *withered branches* in their charms.

Gon. No more; the text is foolish.

Alb. Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile;
 Filths savor but themselves. What have you done?
 Tigers, not daughters, what have you performed?
 A father, and a gracious aged man,
 Whose reverence the head-lugged bear would lick,¹
 Most barbarous, most degenerate! have you madded.
 Could my good brother suffer you to do it!
 A man, a prince, by him so benefited?
 If that the Heavens do not their visible spirits
 Send quickly down to tame these vile offences,
 'Twill come,
 Humanity must perforce prey on itself,
 Like monsters of the deep.

Gon. Milk-livered man!

That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs;
 Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning
 Thine honor from thy suffering, that not know'st,²
 Fools do those villains pity, who are punished
 For they have done their mischief.³ Where's thy drum?
 France spreads his banners in our noiseless land;
 With plumed helm thy slayer begins threats;
 Whilst thou, a moral fool, sitt'st still, and cry'st,
Alack! why does he so?

Alb. See thyself, devil!

Proper deformity seems not in the fiend
 So horrid, as in woman.

Gon. O vain fool!

Alb. Thou changed and self-covered thing, for shame,
 Be-monster not thy feature.⁵ Were it my fitness

¹ This line is not in the folio.

² The rest of this speech is also omitted in the folio.

³ "Goneril means to say that *none but* fools would be excited to commiserate those who are prevented from executing their malicious designs, and punished for their evil intention." Malone doubts whether Goneril alludes to her father; but surely there cannot be a doubt that she does, and to the *pity* for his sufferings expressed by Albany, whom she means indirectly to call a *fool* for expressing it.

⁴ The meaning appears to be, "thou that hast hid the woman under the fiend; thou that hast disguised nature, by wickedness."

⁵ It has been already observed that *feature* was often used for *form* or person in general.

To let these hands obey my blood,¹
 They are apt enough to dislocate and tear
 Thy flesh and bones.—Howe'er thou art a fiend,
 A woman's shape doth shield thee.

Gon. Marry, your manhood now!

Enter a Messenger.

Alb. What news?

Mess. O my good lord, the duke of Cornwall's dead;
 Slain by his servant, going to put out
 The other eye of Gloster.

Alb. Gloster's eyes?

Mess. A servant that he bred, thrilled with remorse,
 Opposed against the act, bending his sword
 To his great master; who, thereat enraged,
 Flew on him, and amongst them felled him dead;
 But not without that harmful stroke, which since
 Hath plucked him after.

Alb. This shows you are about
 You justiceers, that these our other crimes
 So speedily can venge!—But, O poor Gloster!
 Lost he his other eye?

Mess. Both, both, my lord.—
 This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer;
 'Tis from your sister.

Gon. [*Aside.*] One way I like this well;²
 But being widow, and my Gloster with her,
 May all the building in my fancy pluck
 Upon my hateful life. Another way,
 The news is not so tart.—I'll read and answer. [*Exit.*]

Alb. Where was his son when they did take his eyes?

Mess. Come with my lady hither.

Alb. He is not here.

Mess. No, my good lord; I met him back again.

¹ My blood is my passion, my inclination.

² Goneril's plan was to poison her sister, to marry Edmund, to murder Albany, and to get possession of the whole kingdom. As the death of Cornwall facilitated the last part of her scheme, she was pleased at it; but disliked it, as it put it in the power of her sister to marry Edmund.

Alb. Knows he the wickedness?

Mess. Ay, my good lord; 'twas he informed against him;

And quit the house on purpose, that their punishment Might have the freer course.

Alb. Gloster, I live
To thank thee for the love thou show'dst the king,
And to revenge thine eyes.—Come hither, friend;
Tell me what more thou knowest. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.¹ *The French Camp near Dover.*

Enter KENT and a Gentleman.

Kent. Why the king of France is so suddenly gone back, know you the reason?

Gent. Something he left imperfect in the state,
Which since his coming forth is thought of; which
Imports to the kingdom so much fear and danger,
That his personal return was most required,
And necessary.

Kent. Who hath he left behind him general?

Gent. The mareschal of France, monsieur le Fer.

Kent. Did your letters pierce the queen to any demonstration of grief?

Gent. Ay, sir; she took them, read them in my presence;

And now and then an ample tear trilled down
Her delicate cheek. It seemed, she was a queen
Over her passion; who, most rebel-like,
Sought to be king o'er her.

Kent. O, then it moved her.

Gent. Not to a rage; patience and sorrow strove
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once; her smiles and tears

¹ This scene is left out in the folio copy.

Were like a better way.¹ Those happy smiles,²
That played on her ripe lip, seemed not to know
What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence,
As pearls from diamonds dropped.³—In brief, sorrow
Would be a rarity most beloved, if all
Could so become it.

Kent. Made she no verbal question?⁴

Gent. 'Faith, once, or twice, she heaved the name
of father

Pantingly forth, as if it pressed her heart;
Cried, *Sisters! sisters!—Shame of ladies! sisters!*
Kent! father! sisters! What! i' the storm? i' the night?
*Let pity not be believed!*⁵—There she shook
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,
And clamor moistened;⁶ then away she started
To deal with grief alone.

Kent. It is the stars,
The stars above us, govern our conditions;⁷
Else one self mate and mate,⁸ could not beget
Such different issues. You spoke not with her since?

Gent. No.

Kent. Was this before the king returned?

Gent. No; since.

Kent. Well, sir; the poor, distressed Lear is i' the
town;

Who sometime, in his better tune, remembers
What we are come about, and by no means
Will yield to see his daughter.

¹ Both the quartos read, "Were like a better way." Steevens reads, upon the suggestion of Theobald, "a better day." Warburton reads, "a better May." Malone adopts a part of his emendation, and reads, "a better May." Mr. Boaden proposes to read,

"—— her smiles and tears
Were like;—a better way."

² The quartos read *smilets*, which may be a diminutive of the Poet's coining.

³ Steevens would read *dropping*; but *as* must be understood to signify *as if*.

⁴ i. e. discourse, conversation.

⁵ i. e. let not pity be supposed to exist.

⁶ That is, "her outcries were accompanied with tears."

⁷ *Conditions* are dispositions.

⁸ i. e. the self-same husband and wife.

Gent. Why, good sir?

Kent. A sovereign shame so elbows him; his own unkindness,

That stripped her from his benediction, turned her
To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights
To his dog-hearted daughters,—these things sting
His mind so venomously, that burning shame
Detains him from Cordelia.

Gent. Alack, poor gentleman!

Kent. Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you heard not?

Gent. 'Tis so; they are afoot.

Kent. Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master Lear,
And leave you to attend him. Some dear cause¹
Will in concealment wrap me up awhile;
When I am known aright, you shall not grieve
Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you, go
Along with me. [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. *The same. A Tent.*

Enter CORDELIA, Physician, and Soldiers.

Cor. Alack, 'tis he; why, he was met even now
As mad as the vexed sea; singing aloud;
Crowned with rank fumiter,² and furrow weeds,
With harlocks,³ hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers,
Darnel,⁴ and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn.—A century send forth;
Search every acre in the high-grown field,
And bring him to our eye. [*Exit an Officer.*—What
can man's wisdom do,⁵

¹ Important business.

² I. e. fumitory, written by the old herbalists *fumittery*.

³ The quartos read *hardocks*, the folio *hardokes*. Drayton mentions *harlocks* in one of his Eclogues. Perhaps the *charlock* (*sinapis arvensis*), or *wild-mustard*, may be meant.

⁴ *Darnel*, according to Gerard, is the most hurtful of weeds among corn.

⁵ Steevens says that *do* should be omitted as needless and injurious to the metre. *Do* is found in none of the old copies but quarto B.

In the restoring his bereaved sense?
He that helps him, take all my outward worth.

Phy. There is means, madam.
Our foster-nurse of nature is repose,
The which he lacks; that to provoke in him,
Are many simples operative, whose power
Will close the eye of anguish.

Cor. All blessed secrets,
All you unpublished virtues of the earth,
Spring with my tears! be aidant, and remediate,
In the good man's distress!—Seek, seek for him;
Lest his ungoverned rage dissolve the life
That wants the means to lead it.¹

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Madam, news;
The British powers are marching hitherward.

Cor. 'Tis known before; our preparation stands
In expectation of them.—O dear father,
It is thy business that I go about;
Therefore great France
My mourning, and important² tears hath pitied.
No blown³ ambition doth our arms incite,
But love, dear love, and our aged father's right.
Soon may I hear and see him. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE V. A Room in Gloster's Castle.

Enter REGAN and Steward.

Reg. But are my brother's powers set forth?

Stew. Ay, madam.

Reg. Himself

In person there?

Stew. Madam, with much ado;
Your sister is the better soldier.

¹ i. e. the reason which should guide it.

² Important for importunate.

³ No inflated, no swelling pride.

Reg. Lord Edmund spake not with your lord at home?

Stew. No, madam.

Reg. What might import my sister's letter to him?

Stew. I know not, lady.

Reg. 'Faith, he is posted hence on serious matter.

It was great ignorance, Gloster's eyes being out,

To let him live; where he arrives, he moves

All hearts against us. Edmund, I think, is gone,

In pity of his misery, to despatch

His nighted life; moreover, to descry

The strength o'the enemy.

Stew. I must needs after him, madam, with my letter.

Reg. Our troops set forth to-morrow; stay with us; The ways are dangerous.

Stew. I may not, madam;

My lady charged my duty in this business.

Reg. Why should she write to Edmund? Might not you

Transport her purposes by word? Belike,

Something—I know not what.—I'll love thee much,

Let me unseal the letter.

Stew. Madam, I had rather——

Reg. I know your lady does not love her husband;

I am sure of that; and, at her late being here,

She gave strange œiliads,¹ and most speaking looks

To noble Edmund. I know you are of her bosom.

Stew. I, madam?

Reg. I speak in understanding; you are, I know it; Therefore, I do advise you, take this note.²

My lord is dead; Edmund and I have talked;

And more convenient is he for my hand,

'Than for your lady's;—you may gather more.³

If you do find him, pray you, give him this;⁴

¹ Œillade (Fr.), a cast or significant glance of the eye.

² That is, observe what I am saying.

³ You may infer more than I have directly told you.

⁴ Perhaps a ring, or some token, is given to the steward by Regan to be conveyed to Edmund.

And when your mistress hears thus much from you,
I pray, desire her call her wisdom to her.

So, fare you well.

If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,
Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

Stew. 'Would I could meet him, madam! I would
show

What party I do follow.

Reg.

Fare thee well. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.¹ *The Country near Dover.*

Enter GLOSTER and EDGAR, dressed like a Peasant.

Glo. When shall we come to the top of that same
hill?

Edg. You do climb up it now; look, how we labor.

Glo. Methinks the ground is even.

Edg. Horrible steep.

Hark, do you hear the sea?

Glo. No, truly.²

Edg. Why, then your other senses grow imperfect
By your eyes' anguish.

Glo. So may it be, indeed.

Methinks thy voice is altered;³ and thou speak'st
In better phrase, and matter, than thou didst.

Edg. You are much deceived; in nothing am I
changed

But in my garments.

Glo. Methinks you are better spoken.

Edg. Come on, sir; here's the place; stand still.
—How fearful

¹ This scene, and the stratagem by which Gloster is cured of his desperation, are wholly borrowed from Sidney's *Arcadia*, book ii.

² Something to complete the measure seems wanting in this or the foregoing hemistich. The quartos read, as one line:—

“Horrible steep: hark, do you hear the sea?”

³ Edgar alters his voice in order to pass afterwards for a malignant spirit.

And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low !
 The crows, and choughs, that wing the midway air,
 Show scarce so gross as beetles. Half way down
 Hangs one that gathers samphire ;¹ dreadful trade !
 Methinks he seems no bigger than his head.
 The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,
 Appear like mice ; and yon' tall, anchoring bark,
 Diminished to her cock ;² her cock, a buoy
 Almost too small for sight. The murmuring surge,
 That on the unnumbered idle pebbles chafes,
 Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more ;
 Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
 Topple down headlong.

Glo. Set me where you stand.

Edg. Give me your hand. You are now within a
 foot

Of the extreme verge ; for all beneath the moon
 Would I not leap upright.

Glo. Let go my hand.

Here, friend, is another purse ; in it a jewel
 Well worth a poor man's taking. Fairies, and gods,
 Prosper it with thee ! Go thou further off ;
 Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

Edg. Now fare you well, good sir. [*Seems to go.*

Glo. With all my heart.

Edg. Why I do trifle thus with his despair,
 Is done to cure it.

Glo. O, you mighty gods !

This world I do renounce ; and, in your sights,
 Shake patiently my great affliction off.
 If I could bear it longer, and not fall
 To quarrel with your great, opposeless wills,
 My snuff, and loathed part of nature, should

¹ " *Samphire* grows in great plenty on most of the sea-cliffs in this country : it is terrible to see how people gather it, hanging by a rope several fathom from the top of the impending rocks, as it were in the air."—*Smith's History of Waterford*, p. 315, edit. 1774.—Dover cliff was particularly resorted to for this plant. It is still eaten as a pickle in those parts of England bordering on the southern coast.

² i. e. her *cock-boat*. Hence the term *cockswain*.

Burn itself out. If Edgar live, O, bless him!—
Now, fellow, fare thee well.

[*He leaps, and falls along.*

Edg.

Gone, sir? farewell.—

And yet I know not how conceit may rob
The treasury of life, when life itself
Yields to the theft.¹ Had he been where he thought,
By this, had thought been past.—Alive, or dead?
Ho, you sir! friend!—Hear you, sir?—Speak!
Thus might he pass indeed.²—Yet he revives.
What are you, sir?

Glo.

Away, and let me die.

Edg. Hadst thou been aught but gossamer, feathers, air,
So many fathom down precipitating,
Thou hadst shivered like an egg: but thou dost breathe;
Hast heavy substance; bleed'st not; speak'st; art sound.

Ten masts at each³ make not the altitude,
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell;
Thy life's a miracle. Speak yet again.

Glo. But have I fallen, or no?

Edg. From the dread summit of this chalky bourn.⁴
Look up a-height;—the shrill-gorged lark so far
Cannot be seen or heard: do but look up.

Glo. Alack, I have no eyes.—

Is wretchedness deprived that benefit,
To end itself by death? 'Twas yet some comfort,
When misery could beguile the tyrant's rage,
And frustrate his proud will.

Edg.

Give me your arm;

Up.—So;—how is't? Feel you your legs? You stand.

¹ That is, "when life is willing to be destroyed."

² "Thus might he die in reality."

³ i. e. *drawn out*, at length, or *each added* to the other. "*Eche*, exp. *draws out*, ab Anglo-Saxon *elcan*, *elcian*, *Diferre*, vel a verb. to *eak*." *Skinner, Etymolog.* Skinner is right in his last derivation; it is from the Anglo-Saxon *eacan*, to *add*. Pope changed this to *attacht*; Johnson would read *on end*; Steevens proposes *at reach*.

⁴ i. e. this chalky boundary of England.

Glo. Too well, too well.

Edg. This is above all strangeness.
Upon the crown o' the cliff, what thing was that
Which parted from you ?

Glo. A poor, unfortunate beggar.

Edg. As I stood here below, methought his eyes
Were two full moons ; he had a thousand noses,
Horns welked,¹ and waved like the enridged sea ;
It was some fiend. Therefore, thou happy father,
Think that the clearest² gods, who make them honors
Of men's impossibilities,³ have preserved thee.

Glo. I do remember now ; henceforth I'll bear
Affliction, till it do cry out itself,
Enough, enough, and die. That thing you speak of,
I took it for a man ; often 'twould say,
The fiend, the fiend : he led me to that place.

Edg. Bear free⁴ and patient thoughts.—But who
comes here ?

Enter LEAR, fantastically dressed up with flowers.

The safer sense⁵ will ne'er accommodate
His master thus.

Lear. No, they cannot touch me for coining ;
I am the king himself.

Edg. O thou side-piercing sight !

Lear. Nature's above art in that respect. There's
your press-money.⁶ That fellow handles his bow like

¹ *Welked* is marked with protuberances. This and *whelk* are probably only different forms of the same word. The *welk* is a small shell-fish, so called, perhaps, because its shell is marked with convolved protuberant ridges.

² That is, the purest.

³ By *men's impossibilities* perhaps is meant what men call *impossibilities*.

⁴ "Bear *free* and patient thoughts." *Free* here means *pure*, as in other places of these plays.

⁵ "The *safer sense* (says Mr. Blakeway) seems to me to mean the *eye-sight*, which, says Edgar, will never more serve the unfortunate Lear so well as those which Gloucester has remaining will serve him, who is now returned to a right mind.

⁶ It is evident, from the whole of this speech, that Lear fancied himself in a battle. For the meaning of *press-money*, see the first scene of Hamlet.

a crow-keeper;¹ draw me a clothier's yard.—Look, look, a mouse! Peace, peace;—this piece of toasted cheese will do't.—There's my gauntlet; I'll prove it on a giant.—Bring up the brown bills.²—O, well flown, bird!—i' the clout, i' the clout! hewgh!—Give the word.³

Edg. Sweet marjoram.

Lear. Pass.

Glo. I know that voice.

Lear. Ha! Goneril!—with a white beard!—They flattered me like a dog; and told me I had white hairs in my beard, ere the black ones were there. To say *ay*, and *no*, to every thing I said!—*Ay* and *no* too was no good divinity.⁴ When the rain came to wet me once, and the wind to make me chatter; when the thunder would not peace at my bidding; there I found them, there I smelt them out. Go to, they are not men o' their words. They told me I was every thing: 'tis a lie; I am not ague proof.

Glo. The trick⁵ of that voice I do well remember. Is't not the king?

Lear. Ay, every inch, a king;
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes.
I pardoned that man's life: what was thy cause?—

Adultery.—

Thou shalt not die. Die for adultery! No;
The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly
Does lecher in my sight.

¹ Ascham, in speaking of *awkward shooters*, says:—"Another cowereth down, and layeth out his buttockes as though he would shoot at crows."

² Battle-axes.

³ Lear is here raving of *archery*, *falconry*, and a *battle*, jumbled together in quick transition. "*Well flown bird*" was the falconer's expression when the hawk was successful in her flight. The *clout* is the *white mark* at which archers aim. By "*give the word*," the *watchword* in a camp is meant. "The quartos read, "*O well flown bird in the ayre, hugh, give the word.*"

⁴ It has been proposed to read, "*To say ay and no to every thing I said ay and no to, was no good divinity.*" Besides the inaccuracy of construction in the passage as it stands in the text, it does not appear how it could be flattery to *assent* from, as well as *assent* to, every thing Lear said.

⁵ *Trick* is a word used for the peculiarity in a face, voice, or gesture, which distinguishes it from others.

Let copulation thrive, for Gloster's bastard son
 Was kinder to his father, than my daughters
 Got 'tween the lawful sheets.
 To't, luxury,¹ pell-mell, for I lack soldiers.—
 Behold yon simpering dame,
 Whose face between her forks presageth snow;²
 That minces³ virtue, and does shake the head
 To hear of pleasure's name;
 The fitchew, nor the soiled horse,⁴ goes to't
 With a more riotous appetite.
 Down from the waist they are centaurs,
 Though women all above;
 But⁵ to the girdle do the gods inherit,⁶
 Beneath is all the fiends'; there's hell, there's darkness,
 there is the sulphurous pit, burning, scalding, stench,
 consumption.—Fie, fie, fie! pah; pah! Give me an
 ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination.
 There's money for thee.

Glo. O, let me kiss that hand!

Lear. Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.

Glo. O ruined piece of nature! This great world
 Shall so wear out to nought.—Dost thou know me?

Lear. I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost
 thou squiny at me? No, do thy worst, blind Cupid!
 I'll not love.—Read thou this challenge; mark but the
 penning of it.

Glo. Were all the letters suns, I could not see one.

Edg. I would not take this from report;—it is,
 And my heart breaks at it.

Lear. Read.

¹ i. e. *incontinence*.

² The construction is, "Whose face presageth snow between her forks." See Cotgrave's Dict. in v. *Fourcheure*.

³ i. e. puts on an outward, affected seeming of virtue. See Cotgrave in v. *Mineur-se*.

⁴ The *fitchew* is the polecat. A *soiled horse* is a horse that has been fed with hay and corn during the winter, and is turned out in the spring to take the first flush of grass, or has it cut and carried to him. This at once cleanses the animal and fills him with blood. In the old copies the preceding as well as the latter part of Lear's speech is printed as prose. It is doubtful whether any part of it was intended for metre.

⁵ *But* in its exceptive sense.

⁶ Possess.

Glo. What, with the case of eyes?

Lear. O, ho, are you there with me? No eyes in your head, nor no money in your purse? Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a light; yet you see how this world goes.

Glo. I see it feelingly.

Lear. What, art mad? A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears; see how yon' justice rails upon yon' simple thief. Hark, in thine ear. Change places; and, handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief?—Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

Glo. Ay, sir.

Lear. And the creature run from the cur? There thou might'st behold the great image of authority; a dog's obeyed in office.

Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand;
Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back;
Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind
For which thou whipp'st her. The usurer hangs the
cozener.

Through tattered clothes small vices do appear;
Robes, and furred gowns, hide all.¹ Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pygmy's straw doth pierce it.
None does offend, none, I say none; I'll able 'em.²
Take that of me, my friend, who have the power
To seal the accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes;
And, like a scurvy politician, seem
To see the things thou dost not.—Now, now, now,
now.

Pull off my boots;—harder, harder; so.

Edg. O, matter and impertinency³ mixed!
Reason in madness!

Lear. If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes.
I know thee well enough; thy name is Gloster.

¹ From "hide all" to "accuser's lips" is wanting in the quartos.

² i. e. *support* or *uphold* them.

³ *Impertinency* here is used in its old legitimate sense of *something not belonging to the subject*.

Thou must be patient ; we came crying hither.
Thou know'st the first time that we smell the air,
We wawl, and cry.—I will preach to thee ; mark me.

Glo. Alack, alack the day !

Lear. When we are born, we cry, that we are come
To this great stage of fools.—This a good block ?¹
It were a delicate stratagem to shoe
A troop of horse with felt. I'll put it in proof ;
And when I have stolen upon these sons-in-law,
Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill.²

Enter a Gentleman, with Attendants.

Gent. O, here he is ; lay hand upon him.—Sir, .
Your most dear daughter——

Lear. No rescue ? What, a prisoner ? I am even
The natural fool of fortune.—Use me well ;
You shall have ransom. Let me have a surgeon ;
I am cut to the brains.

Gent. You shall have any thing.

Lear. No seconds ? All myself ?
Why, this would make a man, a man of salt,³
To use his eyes for garden water-pots,
Ay, and for laying autumn's dust.

Gent. Good sir,—

Lear. I will die bravely, like a bridegroom. What ?
I will be jovial ; come, come ; I am a king,
My masters, know you that !

Gent. You are a royal one, and we obey you.

Lear. Then there's life in it.⁴ Nay, an you get it,
you shall get it by running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.⁵

[*Exit, running ; Attendants follow.*]

¹ Upon the king's saying "I will preach to thee," the Poet seems to have meant him to pull off his hat, and keep turning it, and feeling it, till the idea of *felt* which the good *hat* or *block* was made of, raises the stratagem in his brain of shoeing a troop of horse with the [same substance] which he held and moulded between his hands.

² This was the cry formerly in the English army when an onset was made on the enemy.

³ "A man of *salt*" is a man of *tears*.

⁴ The case is not yet desperate.

⁵ Mr. Boswell thinks that this passage seems to prove that *sesa* means the very reverse of *cessez*.

Gent. A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch ;
Past speaking of in a king !—Thou hast one daughter,
Who redeems nature from the general curse
Which twain have brought her to.

Edg. Hail, gentle sir.

Gent. Sir, speed you ; what's your will ?

Edg. Do you hear aught, sir, of a battle toward ?

Gent. Most sure and vulgar ; every one hears that,
Which can distinguish sound.

Edg. But, by your favor,
How near's the other army ?

Gent. Near, and on speedy foot ; the main descry
Stands on the hourly thought.¹

Edg. I thank you, sir ; that's all.

Gent. Though that the queen on special cause is
here,
Her army is moved on.

Edg. I thank you, sir. [*Exit Gent.*]

Glo. You ever-gentle gods, take my breath from me ;
Let not my worser spirit² tempt me again
To die before you please !

Edg. Well pray you, father.

Glo. Now, good sir, what are you ?

Edg. A most poor man, made lame by fortune's
blows ;³
Who, by the art of known and feeling⁴ sorrows,
Am pregnant to good pity. Give me your hand,
I'll lead you to some biding.

Glo. Hearty thanks.
The bounty and the benison of Heaven
To boot, and boot !

¹ The main body is expected to be descried every hour.

² By this expression may be meant "*my evil genius*."

³ The folio reads, "made *tame* by fortune's blows." The original is probably the true reading. So in Shakspeare's thirty-seventh Sonnet :—

"So I, made *tame* by fortune's dearest spight."

⁴ *Feeling* is probably used here for *felt*.

Enter Steward.

Stew. A proclaimed prize! Most happy!
That eyeless head of thine was first framed flesh
To raise my fortunes.—Thou old unhappy traitor,
Briefly thyself remember.¹—The sword is out
That must destroy thee.

Glo. Now let thy friendly hand
Put strength enough to it. [*EDGAR opposes.*]

Stew. Wherefore, bold peasant,
Dar'st thou support a published traitor? Hence;
Lest that the infection of his fortune take
Like hold on thee. Let go his arm.

Edg. Ch'll not let go, zir, without vurther 'casion.

Stew. Let go, slave, or thou diest.

Edg. Good gentleman, go your gait,² and let poor
volk pass. And ch'ud ha' been zwaggered out of my
life, 'twould not ha' been zo long as 'tis by a vortnight.
Nay, come not near the old man; keep out, che vor'ye,³
or ise try whether your costard⁴ or my bat be the
harder. Ch'll be plain with you.

Stew. Out, dunghill!

Edg. Ch'll pick your teeth, zir; come; no matter
vor your foins.⁵

[*They fight; and EDGAR knocks him down.*]

Stew. Slave, thou hast slain me.—Villain, take my
purse;

If ever thou wilt thrive, bury my body;
And give the letters, which thou find'st about me,
To Edmund earl of Gloster; seek him out
Upon the British party.—O, untimely death. [*Dies.*]

Edg. I know thee well; a serviceable villain;
As duteous to the vices of thy mistress,
As badness would desire.

¹ i. e. "quickly recollect the past offences of thy life, and recommend thyself to Heaven."

² *Gang your gait* is a common expression in the north.

³ i. e. *I warn you.*

⁴ i. e. *head.* A *bat* is a *staff.* It is the proper name of a walking-stick, in Sussex, even at this day.

⁵ i. e. thrusts.

Glo. What, is he dead?

Edg. Sit you down, father; rest you.—

Let's see his pockets; these letters, that he speaks of,
May be my friends.—He's dead; I am only sorry
He had no other deathsman.—Let us see:
Leave, gentle wax; and, manners, blame us not;
To know our enemies' minds, we'd rip their hearts;
Their papers, is more lawful.¹

[*Reads.*] *Let our reciprocal vows be remembered.
You have many opportunities to cut him off; if your
will want not, time and place will be fruitfully offered.
There is nothing done, if he return the conqueror.
Then am I the prisoner, and his bed my jail; from
the loathed warmth whereof, deliver me, and supply the
place for your labor.*

*Your wife, (so I would say,) and your
affectionate servant,*

GONERIL.

O undistinguished space of woman's will!²—

A plot upon her virtuous husband's life;
And the exchange, my brother!—Here, in the sands,
Thee I'll rake up, the post unsanctified³
Of murderous lechers; and, in the mature time,
With this ungracious paper strike the sight
Of the death-practised duke:⁴ for him 'tis well,
That of thy death and business I can tell.

[*Exit EDGAR, dragging out the body.*

Glo. The king is mad. How stiff is my vile sense,
That I stand up, and have ingenious feeling⁵
Of my huge sorrows! Better I were distract;

¹ i. e. to rip their papers is more lawful.

² This seems to mean, "O, how inordinate, how unbounded, is the licentious inclination of women!"

³ "Thee I'll rake up, the post unsanctified," &c.

i. e. I'll cover thee. *Unsanctified* refers to his want of burial in consecrated ground.

⁴ That is, the duke of Albany, whose death is machinated by practice or treason.

⁵ "Ingenious feeling." Bullokar, in his *Expositor*, interprets *ingenious* by *quick-conceited*, i. e. *acute*.

So should my thoughts be severed from my griefs ;
And woes, by wrong imaginations, lose
The knowledge of themselves.

Re-enter EDGAR.

Edg. Give me your hand ;
Far off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum.
Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII. *A Tent in the French Camp. LEAR
on a bed asleep: Physician, Gentleman,¹ and others
attending.*

Enter CORDELIA and KENT.

Cor. O thou good Kent, how shall I live, and work,
To match thy goodness? My life will be too short,
And every measure fail me.

Kent. To be acknowledged, madam, is o'erpaid.
All my reports go with the modest truth ;
Nor more, nor clipped, but so.

Cor. Be better suited.²
These weeds are memories³ of those worser hours ;
I pr'ythee, put them off.

Kent. Pardon me, dear madam ;
Yet to be known, shortens my made intent.⁴
My boon I make it, that you know me not,
Till time and I think meet.

Cor. Then be it so, my good lord.—How does the
king? [*To the Physician.*]

Phys. Madam, sleeps still.

Cor. O you kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature !

¹ In the folio, the *gentleman* and the *physician* are one and the same person.

² i. e. be better *dressed*, put on a better *suit* of clothes.

³ *Memories* are *memorials*.

⁴ A *MADE intent* is an *INTENT formed*.

The untuned and jarring senses, O, wind up,
Of this child-changed father!¹

Phys. So please your majesty,
That we may wake the king? he hath slept long.

Cor. Be governed by your knowledge, and proceed
I' the sway of your own will. Is he arrayed?

Gent. Ay, madam; in the heaviness of his sleep,
We put fresh garments on him.

Phys. Be by, good madam, when we do awake him;
I doubt not of his temperance.

Cor. Very well.

Phys. Please you, draw near.—Louder the music
there.²

Cor. O my dear father! Restoration, hang
Thy medicine on my lips; and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms, that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made!

Kent. Kind and dear princess!

Cor. Had you not been their father, these white
flakes

Had challenged pity of them. Was this a face
To be exposed against the warring winds?
[To stand against the deep, dread-bolted thunder?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick, cross lightning? to watch (poor perdu!)
With this thin helm?³] Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
Against my fire; and wast thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine, and rogues forlorn,
In short and musty straw? Alack, alack!

¹ That is, *changed by his children*; a father whose jarring senses have been untuned by the ingratitude of his daughters.

² This and the foregoing speech are not in the folio. It has been already observed, that Shakspeare considered *soft music* as favorable to sleep. Lear, we may suppose, had been thus composed to rest; and now the physician desires *louder music* to be played, for the purpose of waking him.

³ The lines in crotchets are not in the folio. The allusion is to the forlorn hope of an army, called in French *enfants perdus*; amongst other desperate adventures in which they were engaged, the night-watches seem to have been a common one.

very bad explanation - perhaps, for good reason,
not jarring senses, as some have imagined
senses - These come from the "untuned"

'Tis wonder, that thy life and wits at once
Had not concluded all.¹—He wakes; speak to him.

Phys. Madam, do you; 'tis fittest.

Cor. How does my royal lord? How fares your
majesty?

Lear. You do me wrong, to take me out o' the
grave.—

Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.

Cor. Sir, do you know me?

Lear. You are a spirit, I know; when did you die?

Cor. Still, still, far wide!

Phys. He's scarce awake; let him alone awhile.

Lear. Where have I been? Where am I?—Fair
daylight?

I am mightily abused.²—I should even die with pity,
To see another thus.—I know not what to say.

I will not swear these are my hands:—let's see;—
I feel this pin prick. 'Would I were assured
Of my condition.

Cor. O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me.
No, sir, you must not kneel.

Lear. Pray, do not mock me.

I am a very foolish, fond old man,
Fourscore and upward;³ and, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks I should know you, and know this man:
Yet I am doubtful; for I am mainly ignorant.
What place this is; and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me;
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.

¹ i. e. had not all ended.

² I am strangely imposed upon by appearances; I am in a strange
mist of uncertainty.

³ The folio here adds the words "not an hour more or less;" which
have been regarded as the interpolation of some player.

Cor. And so I am, I am.

Lear. Be your tears wet? Yes, 'faith. I pray,
weep not;

If you have poison for me, I will drink it.

I know you do not love me; for your sisters

Have, as I do remember, done me wrong.

You have some cause; they have not.

Cor. No cause, no cause.

Lear. Am I in France?

Kent. In your own kingdom, sir.

Lear. Do not abuse me.

Phys. Be comforted, good madam. The great rage,
You see, is killed in him; [and yet it is danger
To make him even¹ o'er the time he has lost.]

Desire him to go in; trouble him no more,

Till further settling.

Cor. Will't please your highness walk?

Lear. You must bear with me;
'Pray you now, forget and forgive; I am old and foolish.

[*Exeunt* LEAR, CORDELIA, Physician, and
Attendants.]

[*Gent.* Holds it true, sir,
That the duke of Cornwall was so slain?

Kent. Most certain, sir.

Gent. Who is conductor of his people?

Kent. As 'tis said,
The bastard son of Gloster.

Gent. They say, Edgar,
His banished son, is with the earl of Kent
In Germany.

Kent. Report is changeable.

'Tis time to look about; the powers o' the kingdom
Approach apace.

Gent. The arbitrement is like to be a bloody.

Fare you well, sir. [Exit.]

¹ "To make him even o'er the time he has lost,"
is to make the occurrences of it plain or level to his troubled mind. See
Baret's *Alvearie*, 1573, E. 307.

Kent. My point and period will be thoroughly wrought,
Or well, or ill, as this day's battle's fought.¹ [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I. *The Camp of the British Forces, near Dover.*

Enter, with drums and colors, EDMUND, REGAN, Officers, Soldiers, and others.

Edm. Know of the duke, if his last purpose hold ;
Or, whether since he is advised by aught
To change the course. He's full of alteration,
And self-reproving ;—bring his constant pleasure.²
[*To an Officer, who goes out.*

Reg. Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

Edm. 'Tis to be doubted, madam.

Reg. Now, sweet lord,
You know the goodness I intend upon you.
Tell me,—but truly,—but then speak the truth,
Do you not love my sister ?

Edm. In honored love.

[*Reg.* But have you never found my brother's way
To the forefended³ place ?

Edm. That thought abuses⁴ you.

Reg. I am doubtful that you have been conjunct
And bosomed with her, as far as we call hers.

Edm. No, by mine honor, madam.]

¹ What is printed in crotchets here and above, is not in the folio.

² i. e. his settled resolution.

³ The *first* and *last* of these speeches within crotchets are inserted in Hanmer's, Theobald's, and Warburton's editions ; the two intermediate ones, which were omitted in all others, are restored from the 4to. 1608.

⁴ *Imposes* on you ; you are *deceived*.

Reg. I never shall endure her. Dear my lord,
Be not familiar with her.

Edm. Fear me not ;—
She, and the duke her husband,——

Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, *and* Soldier.

Gon. I had rather lose the battle, than that sister
Should loosen him and me. [*Aside.*]

Alb. Our very loving sister, well be met.—
Sir, this I hear,—The king is come to his daughter,
With others, whom the rigor of our state
Forced to cry out. [Where I could not be honest,
I never yet was valiant. For this business,
It toucheth us as France invades our land,
Not bolds¹ the king ; with others, whom, I fear,
More just and heavy causes make oppose.

Edm. Sir, you speak nobly.]

Reg. Why is this reasoned ?

Gon. Combine together 'gainst the enemy:
For these domestic and particular broils²
Are not to question here.

Alb. Let us then determine
With the ancient of war on our proceedings.

Edm. I shall attend you presently at your tent.³

Reg. Sister, you'll go with us ?

Gon. No.

Reg. 'Tis most convenient ; 'pray you, go with us.

Gon. O, ho, I know the riddle. [*Aside.*] I will go.

As they are going out, enter EDGAR, *disguised.*

Edg. If e'er your grace had speech with man so poor,
Hear me one word.

¹ "This business (says Albany) touches us, as France invades our land, not as it *emboldens* or *encourages* the king to assert his former title." There are several examples of this use of the verb *bold* in old writers.

² The quartos have it :—

"For these domestic *doore* particulars."

The folio reads in the subsequent line :—

"Are not *the* question here."

³ This speech, and the lines above in brackets, are wanting in the folio.

Alb. I'll overtake you.—Speak.
[Exeunt EDMUND, REGAN, GONERIL, Officers, Soldiers, and Attendants.]

Edg. Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.
 If you have victory, let the trumpet sound
 For him that brought it; wretched though I seem,
 I can produce a champion, that will prove
 What is avouched there. If you miscarry,
 Your business of the world hath so an end,
 And machination ceases.¹ Fortune love you!

Alb. Stay till I have read the letter.

Edg. I was forbid it.
 When time shall serve, let but the herald cry,
 And I'll appear again. *[Exit.]*

Alb. Why, fare thee well; I will o'erlook thy paper.

Re-enter EDMUND.

Edm. The enemy's in view; draw up your powers:
 Here is the guess of their true strength and forces
 By diligent discovery;²—but your haste
 Is now urged on you.

Alb. We will greet the time.³ *[Exit.]*

Edm. To both these sisters have I sworn my love;
 Each jealous of the other, as the stung
 Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?
 Both! one? or neither? Neither can be enjoyed,
 If both remain alive. To take the widow,
 Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril;
 And hardly shall I carry out my side,⁴
 Her husband being alive. Now, then, we'll use
 His countenance for the battle; which being done,
 Let her, who would be rid of him, devise
 His speedy taking off. As for the mercy

¹ i. e. all designs against your life will have an end. These words are not in the quartos.

² i. e. the *conjecture*, or what we can gather by diligent *espial*, of their strength.

³ i. e. be ready to meet the occasion.

⁴ Hardly shall I be able to make my side (i. e. my *party*) good; to maintain the game. It was a phrase commonly used at cards.

Which he intends to Lear, and to Cordelia,—
 The battle done, and they within our power,
 Shall never see his pardon ; for my state
 Stands on me to defend, not to debate. [Exit.

SCENE II. *A Field between the two Camps.*

Alarum within. Enter, with drum and colors, LEAR, CORDELIA, and their Forces ; and exeunt.

*Enter EDGAR and GLOSTER.*¹

Edg. Here, father, take the shadow of this tree
 For your good host ; pray that the right may thrive.
 If ever I return to you again,
 I'll bring you comfort.

Glo. Grace go with you, sir !
[Exit EDGAR.

Alarums ; afterwards a retreat. Re-enter EDGAR.

Edg. Away, old man, give me thy hand, away ;
 King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter ta'en.
 Give me thy hand ; come on.

Glo. No further, sir ; a man may rot even here.

Edg. What, in ill thoughts again ? Men must endure
 Their going hence, even as their coming hither ;
 Ripeness is all.² Come on.

Glo. And that's true too.
[Exeunt.

¹ Those who are curious to know how far Shakspeare was indebted to the *Arcadia*, will find a chapter entitled "The Pitifull State and Storie of the Paphlagonian unkinde King, and his kinde Sonne; first related by the Sonne, then by the blinde Father," at p. 141, of the edition of 1590, 4to.

² i. e. to be ready, prepared, is all.

SCENE III. *The British Camp near Dover.*

Enter, in conquest, with drum and colors, EDMUND; LEAR and CORDELIA, as prisoners; Officers, Soldiers, &c.

Edm. Some officers take them away; good guard;
Until their greater pleasures first be known
That are to censure¹ them.

Cor. We are not the first,
Who, with best meaning, have incurred the worst.²
For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;
Myself could else outfrown false fortune's frown.
Shall we not see these daughters, and these sisters?

Lear. No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison:
We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage.
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness. So we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too,
Who loses, and who wins; who's in, who's out;—
And take upon us the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies.³ And we'll wear out,
In a walled prison, packs and sects⁴ of great ones,
That ebb and flow by the moon.

Edm. Take them away.

Lear. Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,
The gods themselves throw incense. Have I caught
thee?

He that parts us, shall bring a brand from heaven,
And fire us hence, like foxes.⁵ Wipe thine eyes;

¹ i. e. to pass sentence or judgment on them.

² That is, "the worst that fortune can inflict."

³ "As if we were angels, endowed with the power of prying into the original motives of action, and the mysteries of conduct."

⁴ *Packs* and *sects* are *combinations* and *parties*.

⁵ Alluding to the old practice of smoking foxes out of their holes.

The gouteers shall devour them, flesh and fell,¹
Ere they shall make us weep; we'll see them starve
first.

Come. [*Exeunt LEAR and CORDELIA, guarded.*]

Edm. Come hither, captain; hark.

Take thou this note; ² [*Giving a paper.*] go, follow them
to prison.

One step I have advanced thee; if thou dost
As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way
To noble fortunes. Know thou this,—that men
Are as the time is: to be tender-minded
Does not become a sword.—Thy great employment
Will not bear question; ³ either say, thou'lt do't,
Or thrive by other means.

Off. I'll do't, my lord.

Edm. About it; and write happy, when thou hast
done.

Mark,—I say instantly; and carry it so,
As I have set it down.

Off. I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats;
If it be man's work, I will do it. [*Exit Officer.*]

Flourish. Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, Officers,
and Attendants.

Alb. Sir, you have shown to-day your valiant strain,
And fortune led you well. You have the captives,
Who were the opposites of this day's strife.
We do require them of you; so to use them,
As we shall find their merits and our safety
May equally determine.

Edm. Sir, I thought it fit
To send the old and miserable king
To some retention, and appointed guard;

¹ "The gouteers shall devour them, flesh and fell."

The gouteers, i. e. morbus Gallicus. The quartos have *good yeares*, the common corruption in Shakspeare's time. *Flesh* and *fell* is *flesh* and *skin*.

² This was a warrant signed by the bastard and Goneril, for the execution of Lear and Cordelia, referred to in a subsequent scene by Edmund.

³ i. e. admit of debate.

Whose age has charms in it, whose title more,
 To pluck the common bosom on his side,
 And turn our impressed lances¹ in our eyes
 Which do command them. With him I sent the queen;
 My reason all the same; and they are ready
 To-morrow, or at further space, to appear
 Where you shall hold your session. [At this time
 We sweat and bleed; the friend hath lost his friend;
 And the best quarrels, in the heat, are cursed
 By those that feel their sharpness.—
 The question of Cordelia, and her father,
 Requires a fitter place.²]

Alb. Sir, by your patience,
 I hold you but a subject of this war,
 Not as a brother.

Reg. That's as we list to grace him.
 Methinks our pleasure might have been demanded,
 Ere you had spoke so far. He led our powers;
 Bore the commission³ of my place and person;
 The which immediacy⁴ may well stand up,
 And call itself your brother.

Gon. Not so hot:
 In his own grace⁵ he doth exalt himself,
 More than in your advancement.

Reg. In my rights,
 By me invested, he compeers the best.

Gon. That were the most, if he should husband
 you.⁶

Reg. Jesters do oft prove prophets.

Gon. Holla, holla!
 That eye that told you so looked but asquint.⁷

¹ That is, the lancemen we have hired by giving them press-money.

² i. e. the determination of what shall be done with Cordelia and her father should be reserved for greater privacy. This is not in the folio.

³ *Commission* for authority.

⁴ *Immediacy*, says Malone, is close and immediate connection with me, and direct authority from me. *Immediate* is the reading of the quartos.

⁵ *Grace* here means noble deportment. The folio has *addition*, instead of *advancement*, in the next line.

⁶ "If he were married to you, you could not say more than this, nor could he enjoy greater power." In the folio this line is given to Albany.

⁷ Alluding to the proverb, "Love, being jealous, makes a good eye look asquint."

Reg. Lady, I am not well ; else I should answer
From a full-flowing stomach.—General,
Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony ;
Dispose of them, of me ; the walls are thine.¹
Witness the world, that I create thee here
My lord and master.

Gon. Mean you to enjoy him ?

Alb. The let-alone lies not in your good will.²

Edm. Nor in thine, lord.

Alb. Half-blooded fellow, yes.

Reg. Let the drum strike, and prove my title thine.³

[*To EDMUND.*

Alb. Stay yet ; hear reason. Edmund, I arrest thee
On capital treason ; and, in thine, attain⁴
This gilded serpent. [*Pointing to GON.*—For your
claim, fair sister,

I bar it in the interest of my wife ;
'Tis she is subcontracted to this lord,
And I, her husband, contradict your bans.
If you will marry, make your love to me,
My lady is bespoke.

Gon. An interlude !

Alb. Thou art armed, Gloster.—Let the trumpet
sound ;

If none appear to prove upon thy person,
Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,
There is my pledge ; [*Throwing down a glove ;*] I'll
prove it on thy heart,

Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing less

Then I have here proclaimed thee.

Reg. Sick, O, sick !

Gon. If not, I'll ne'er trust poison. [*Aside.*

Edm. There's my exchange. [*Throwing down a
glove.*] What in the world he is

¹ A metaphor taken from the camp, and signifying *to surrender at discretion*. This line is not in the quartos.

² "To obstruct their union lies not in your good pleasure."

³ It appears, from this speech, that Regan did not know that Albany had discharged her forces. This line is given to Edmund in the quartos.

⁴ The folio reads "*thy arrest*."

That names me traitor, villain-like he lies.
 Call by thy trumpet; he that dares approach,
 On him, on you, (who not?) I will maintain
 My truth and honor firmly.

Alb. A herald, ho!

Edm. A herald, ho, a herald!

Alb. Trust to thy single virtue;¹ for thy soldiers,
 All levied in my name, have in my name
 Took their discharge.

Reg. This sickness grows upon me.

Enter a Herald.

Alb. She is not well; convey her to my tent.

[*Exit REGAN, led.*]

Come hither, herald.—Let the trumpet sound,—
 And read out this.

Off. Sound, trumpet. [*A trumpet sounds.*]

Herald reads.

*If any man of quality, or degree, within the lists of
 the army, will maintain upon Edmund, supposed earl
 of Gloster, that he is a manifold traitor, let him appear
 at the third sound of the trumpet. He is bold in his
 defence.*

Edm. Sound.

[1 trumpet.

Her. Again.

[2 trumpet.

Her. Again.

[3 trumpet.

[*Trumpet answers within.*]

Enter EDGAR, armed, preceded by a trumpet.

Alb. Ask him his purposes, why he appears
 Upon this call o' the trumpet.

Her.

What are you?

Your name, your quality? And why you answer
 This present summons?

¹ i. e. valor; a Roman sense of the word.

Edg. Know, my name is lost ;
By treason's tooth bare-gnawn, and canker-bit.
Yet am I noble as the adversary
I come to cope withal.

Alb. Which is that adversary?

Edg. What's he that speaks for Edmund, earl of
Gloster?

Edm. Himself ;—what say'st thou to him?

Edg. Draw thy sword ;
That if my speech offend a noble heart,
Thy arm may do thee justice ; here is mine.
Behold, it is the privilege of mine honors,
My oath, and my profession ; I protest,—
Maugre thy strength, youth, place, and eminence,
Despite thy victor sword, and fire-new fortune,
Thy valor, and thy heart,—thou art a traitor ;
False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father ;
Conspirant 'gainst this high, illustrious prince ;
And, from the extremest upward of thy head,
To the descent and dust beneath thy feet,
A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou, *No*,
This sword, this arm, and my best spirits, are bent
To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,
Thou liest.

Edm. In wisdom, I should ask thy name ;¹
But, since thy outside looks so fair and warlike,
And that thy tongue some 'say'² of breeding breathes,
What safe and nicely³ I might well delay
By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn.
Back do I toss these treasons to thy head ;
With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart ;
Which, (for they yet glance by, and scarcely bruise,)
This sword of mine shall give them instant way,
Where they shall rest forever.⁴—Trumpets, speak.

[*Alarums. They fight ; EDMUND falls.*]

¹ Because, if his adversary was not of equal rank, Edmund might have declined the combat.

² *Say*, or *assay*, is a *sample*, a *taste*.

³ This seems to mean "What I might *safely* well delay, if I acted *punctiliously*." This line is omitted in the quartos.

⁴ To that place where they shall rest forever, i. e. thy heart.

Alb. O, save him, save him !¹

Gon. This is mere practice, Gloster.
By the law of arms, thou wast not bound to answer
An unknown opposite ; thou art not vanquished,
But cozened and beguiled.

Alb. Shut your mouth, dame,
Or with this paper shall I stop it.—Hold, sir ;—
Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil.
No tearing, lady ; I perceive you know it.

[*Gives the letter to EDMUND.*]

Gon. Say, if I do ; the laws are mine, not thine.
Who shall arraign me for't ?

Alb. Most monstrous !
Know'st thou this paper ?²

Gon. Ask me not what I know.
[*Exit GONERIL.*]

Alb. Go after her ; she's desperate ; govern her.

[*To an Officer, who goes out.*]

Edm. What you have charged me with, that have I
done ;
And more, much more. The time will bring it out ;
'Tis past, and so am I. But what art thou,
That hast this fortune on me ? If thou art noble,
I do forgive thee.

Edg. Let's exchange charity.
I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund ;
If more, the more thou hast wronged me.
My name is Edgar, and thy father's son.
The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us.³
The dark and vicious place where thee he got,
Cost him his eyes.

Edm. Thou hast spoken right ; 'tis true ;
The wheel is come full circle : I am here.

¹ Albany desires that Edmund's life may be spared at present, only to obtain his confession, and to convict him openly by his own letter.

² "Knowest thou these letters ?" says Leir to Regan, in the old anonymous play, when he shows her both her own and her sister's letters, which were written to procure his death ; upon which she snatches the letters and tears them.

³ The folio reads "to plague us."

Alb. Methought thy very gait did prophesy
A royal nobleness.—I must embrace thee ;
Let sorrow split my heart, if ever I
Did hate thee, or thy father.

Edg. Worthy prince, I know't.

Alb. Where have you hid yourself ?

How have you known the miseries of your father ?

Edg. By nursing them, my lord.—List a brief
tale ;—

And, when 'tis told, O that my heart would burst !
The bloody proclamation to escape,
That followed me so near, (O, our lives' sweetness !
That we the pain of death would hourly die,¹
Rather than die at once !) taught me to shift
Into a madman's rags ; to assume a semblance
That very dogs disdained ; and in this habit
Met I my father with his bleeding rings,
Their precious stones new lost ; became his guide,
Led him, begged for him, saved him from despair ;
Never, (O fault !) revealed myself unto him,
Until, some half-hour past, when I was armed,
Not sure, though hoping, of this good success,
I asked his blessing, and, from first to last,
Told him my pilgrimage. But his flawed heart,
(Alack, too weak the conflict to support !)
'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
Burst smilingly.

Edm. This speech of yours hath moved me,
And shall, perchance, do good. But speak you on ;
You look as you had something more to say.

Alb. If there be more, more woful, hold it in ;
For I am almost ready to dissolve,
Hearing of this.

² [*Edg.* This would have seemed a period
To such as love not sorrow ; but another,
To amplify too much, would make much more,

¹ The quartos read :—

“ That *with* the pain of death *would* hourly die.”

² The lines within crotchets are not in the folio.

And top extremity.¹

Whilst I was big in clamor, came there a man,
Who, having seen me in my worst estate,
Shunned my abhorred society; but then finding
Who 'twas that so endured, with his strong arms
He fastened on my neck, and bellowed out
As he'd burst heaven; threw him² on my father;
Told the most piteous tale of Lear and him,
That ever ear received; which in recounting
His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life
Began to crack. Twice then the trumpet sounded,
And there I left him tranced.

Alb. But who was this?

Edg. Kent, sir, the banished Kent; who in disguise
Followed his enemy king, and did him service
Improper for a slave.]

Enter a Gentleman, hastily, with a bloody knife.

Gent. Help! help! O, help!

Edg. What kind of help?

Alb. Speak, man.

Edg. What means that bloody knife?

Gent. 'Tis hot, it smokes;

It came even from the heart of——

Alb. Who, man? speak.

¹ Of this difficult passage, which is probably corrupt, Steevens gives the following explanation:—"This would have seemed a period to such as love not sorrow, but—another, i. e. but I must add another, i. e. another period, another kind of conclusion to my story, such as will increase the horrors of what has been already told." It will be necessary, if we admit this interpretation, to point the passage thus:—

'——— but another:—

(To amplify too much, would make much more,
And top extremity,)

Whilst I was big," &c.

Malone's explanation is:—"This would have seemed the utmost completion of woe, to such as do not delight in sorrow; but *another*, of a different disposition, to amplify misery 'would give more strength to that which hath too much;' "referring to the bastard's desiring to hear more, and to Albany's thinking that enough had been said.

² The quartos read, "threw *me* on my father." The reading in the text is certainly more likely to be correct.

Gent. Your lady, sir, your lady ; and her sister
By her is poisoned ; she hath confessed it.¹

Edm. I was contracted to them both ; all three
Now marry in an instant.

Alb. Produce their bodies, be they alive or dead !—
This judgment of the Heavens, that makes us tremble,
Touches us not with pity. [*Exit Gentleman.*]

Enter KENT.

Edg. Here comes Kent, sir.

Alb. O ! it is he.

The time will not allow the compliment,
Which very manners urges.

Kent. I am come
To bid my king and master aye good night ;
Is he not here ?

Alb. Great thing of us forgot !—
Speak, Edmund, where's the king ? and where's Cor-
delia ?—

Seest thou this object, Kent ?

[*The bodies of GONERIL and REGAN are
brought in.*]

Kent. Alack, why thus ?

Edm. Yet Edmund was beloved.
The one the other poisoned for my sake,
And after slew herself.

Alb. Even so.—Cover their faces.

Edm. I pant for life :—Some good I mean to do,
Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send—
Be brief in it—to the castle, for my writ
Is on the life of Lear, and on Cordelia.—
Nay, send in time.

Alb. Run, run, O, run—

Edg. To whom, my lord ?—Who has the office ? send
Thy token of reprieve.

Edm. Well thought on ; take my sword,
Give it the captain.

¹ Thus the quarto. The folio reads "she confesses it."
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Alb. Haste thee, for thy life. [*Exit* EDGAR.]

Edm. He hath commission from thy wife and me
To hang Cordelia in the prison, and
To lay the blame upon her own despair,
That she fordid¹ herself.

Alb. The gods defend her ! Bear him hence awhile.
[EDMUND is borne off.]

Enter LEAR, with CORDELIA dead in his arms;² EDGAR,
Officer, and others.

Lear. Howl, howl, howl, howl !—O, you are men
of stones ;
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so
That heaven's vault should crack.—O, she is gone for-
ever !—

I know when one is dead, and when one lives ;
She's dead as earth.—Lend me a looking-glass ;
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,
Why, then she lives.

Kent. Is this the promised end ?³

Edg. Or image of that horror ?

Alb. Fall, and cease !⁴

Lear. This feather stirs ; she lives ! if it be so,
It is a chance that does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.

Kent. O my good master ! [*Kneeling.*

Lear. 'Pr'ythee, away.

Edg. 'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

Lear. A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all !

¹ To *fordo* signifies to *destroy*. It is used again in *Hamlet*.

² The old historians say that Cordelia retired with victory from the battle, which she conducted in her father's cause, and thereby replaced him on the throne ; but in a subsequent one fought against her (after the death of the old king), by the sons of Regan and Goneril, she was taken, and died miserably in prison. Geoffrey of Monmouth, the original relater of the story, says that she killed herself.

³ Kent, in contemplating the scene before him, recollects those passages of St. Mark's Gospel, in which Christ foretells to his disciples *the end of the world* ; and hence his question. To which Edgar adds, Or only a representation or resemblance of that horror.

⁴ To *cease* is to *die*. "Rather fall, and cease to be at once, than continue in existence only to be wretched."

I might have saved her ; now she's gone forever !
 Cordelia, Cordelia, stay a little. Ha !
 What is't thou say'st ?—Her voice was ever soft,
 Gentle, and low ; an excellent thing in woman.—
 I killed the slave that was a-hanging thee.

Off. 'Tis true, my lords, he did.

Lear. Did I not, fellow ?
 I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion,
 I would have made them skip ; I am old now.—
 And these same crosses spoil me.—Who are you ?
 Mine eyes are none o'the best.—I'll tell you straight.

Kent. If Fortune brag of two she loved and hated,
 One of them we behold.¹

Lear. This is a dull sight : ² Are you not Kent ?

Kent. The same ;
 Your servant Kent. Where is your servant Caius ?

Lear. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that ;
 He'll strike, and quickly too.—He's dead and rotten.

Kent. No, my good lord, I am the very man ;—

Lear. I'll see that straight.

Kent. That, from your first of difference and decay,
 Have followed your sad steps.

Lear. You are welcome hither.

Kent. Nor no man else ; all's cheerless, dark, and
 deadly.—
 Your eldest daughters have fore-doomed ³ themselves,
 And desperately are dead.

Lear. Ay, so I think.

Alb. He knows not what he sees ; ⁴ and vain it is
 That we present us to him.

Edg. Very bootless.

¹ "If Fortune, to display the plenitude of her power, should brag of two persons, one of whom she had highly elevated, and the other she had wofully depressed, we now behold the latter." The quarto reads, "She loved or hated," which confirms this sense.

² *Lear* means that his *eyesight* was bedimmed either by excess of grief, or, as is usual, by the approach of death.

³ Thus the quarto: the folio reads *foredone*, which is probably right. See note 1, on page 130.

⁴ The quarto reads *says*.

Enter an Officer.

Off. Edmund is dead, my lord.

Alb. That's but a trifle here.—

You lords, and noble friends, know our intent.
What comfort to this great decay¹ may come,
Shall be applied. For us, we will resign,
During the life of this old majesty,
To him our absolute power.—You, to your rights;

[*To EDGAR and KENT.*

With boot, and such addition as your honors
Have more than merited.²—All friends shall taste
The wages of their virtue, and all foes
The cup of their deservings.—O, see, see!

Lear. And my poor fool is hanged!³ No, no, no life;
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all? O, thou wilt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never!—

'Pray you, undo this button:⁴ thank you, sir.—
Do you see this?—Look on her,—look,—her lips,—
Look there, look there!—

[*He dies.*

Edg. He faints!—My lord, my lord,—

Kent. Break, heart; I pr'ythee, break!

Edg. Look up, my lord.

Kent. Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass! he hates
him,

That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.

Edg. O, he is gone indeed.

Kent. The wonder is, he hath endured so long;
He but usurped his life.

Alb. Bear them from hence.—Our present business

¹ "This great decay" is Lear.

² These lines are addressed to Kent as well as to Edgar. *Boot is advantage, increase.* By *honors* is meant *honorable conduct*.

³ This is an expression of tenderness for his dead Cordelia (not his fool, as some have thought), on whose lips he is still intent, and dies while he is searching there for indications of life. "*Poor fool*," in the age of Shakspeare, was an expression of endearment.

⁴ The Rev. Dr. J. Warton judiciously observes, that the swelling and heaving of the heart is described by this most expressive circumstance.

Is general woe. Friends of my soul, you twain
[To KENT and EDGAR.

Rule in this realm, and the gored state sustain.

Kent. I have a journey, sir, shortly to 'go ;
My master calls, and I must not say no.

Alb. The weight of this sad time we must obey ;
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.
The oldest hath borne most ; we, that are young,
Shall never see so much, nor live so long.
[*Exeunt, with a dead march.*

THE tragedy of Lear is deservedly celebrated among the dramas of Shakspeare. There is, perhaps, no play which keeps the attention so strongly fixed ; which so much agitates our passions, and interests our curiosity. The artful involutions of distinct interests, the striking oppositions of contrary characters, the sudden changes of fortune, and the quick succession of events, fill the mind with a perpetual tumult of indignation, pity, and hope. There is no scene which does not contribute to the aggravation of the distress or conduct of the action, and scarce a line which does not conduce to the progress of the scene. So powerful is the current of the Poet's imagination, that the mind, which once ventures within it, is hurried irresistibly along.

On the seeming improbability of Lear's conduct, it may be observed, that he is represented according to histories at that time vulgarly received as true. And, perhaps, if we turn our thoughts upon the barbarity and ignorance of the age to which this story is referred, it will appear not so unlikely as while we estimate Lear's manners by our own. Such preference of one daughter to another, or resignation of dominion on such conditions, would be yet credible if told of a petty prince of Guinea or Madagascar. Shakspeare, indeed, by the mention of his earls and dukes, has given us the idea of times more civilized, and of life regulated by softer manners ; and the truth is, that, though he so nicely discriminates, and so minutely describes, the characters of men, he commonly neglects and confounds the characters of ages, by mingling customs ancient and modern, English and foreign.

My learned friend, Mr. Warton, who has, in *The Adventurer*, very minutely criticised this play, remarks, that the instances of cruelty are too savage and shocking, and that the intervention of Edmund destroys the simplicity of the story. These objections may, I think, be answered by repeating that the cruelty of the daughters is an historical fact, to which the Poet has added little, having only drawn it into a series of dialogue and action. But I am not able to apologize with equal plausibility for the extrusion of Gloster's eyes, which seems an act too horrid to be endured in dramatic exhibition, and such as must always compel the mind to relieve its distress by incredulity. Yet let it be remembered that our author well knew what would please the audience for which he wrote.

The injury done by Edmund to the simplicity of the action, is abundantly recompensed by the addition of variety; by the art with which he is made to coöperate with the chief design, and the opportunity which he gives the Poet of combining perfidy with perfidy, and connecting the wicked son with the wicked daughters, to impress this important moral, that villany is never at a stop; that crimes lead to crimes, and at last terminate in ruin.

But though this moral be incidentally enforced, Shakspeare has suffered the virtue of Cordelia to perish in a just cause, contrary to the natural ideas of justice, to the hope of the reader, and, what is yet more strange, to the faith of chronicles. Yet this conduct is justified by *The Spectator*, who blames Tate for giving Cordelia success and happiness in his alteration, and declares, that, in his opinion, *the tragedy has lost half its beauty*. Dennis has remarked, whether justly or not, that, to secure the favorable reception of *Cato*, *the town was poisoned with much false and abominable criticism*, and that endeavors had been used to discredit and decry poetical justice. A play in which the wicked prosper, and the virtuous miscarry, may doubtless be good, because it is a just representation of the common events of human life; but, since all reasonable beings naturally love justice, I cannot easily be persuaded that the observation of justice makes a play worse; or that, if other excellences are equal, the audience will not always rise better pleased from the final triumph of persecuted virtue.

In the present case, the public has decided. Cordelia, from the time of Tate, has always retired with victory and felicity. And, if my sensations could add any thing to the general suffrage, I might relate, I was many years ago so shocked by Cordelia's death, that I know not whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes of the play till I undertook to revise them as an editor.

There is another controversy among the critics concerning this play. It is disputed whether the predominant image in Lear's disordered mind be the loss of his kingdom or the cruelty of his daughters. Mr. Murphy, a very judicious critic, has evinced, by induction of particular passages, that the cruelty of his daughters is the primary source of his distress, and that the loss of royalty affects him only as a secondary and subordinate evil. He observes, with great justness, that Lear would move our compassion but little, did we not rather consider the injured father than the degraded king.

The story of this play, except the episode of Edmund, which is derived, I think, from Sidney, is taken originally from Geoffry of Monmouth, whom Holinshed generally copied; but perhaps immediately from an old historical ballad. My reason for believing that the play was posterior to the ballad, rather than the ballad to the play, is, that the ballad has nothing of Shakspeare's nocturnal tempest, which is too striking to have been omitted, and that it follows the chronicle; it has the rudiments of the play, but none of its amplifications; it first hinted Lear's madness, but did not array it in circumstances. The writer of the ballad added something to the history, which is a proof that he would have added more, if more had occurred to his mind, and more must have occurred if he had seen Shakspeare.

JOHNSON.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

THE original relater of this story appears to have been Luigi da Porto, a gentleman of Vicenza, who died in 1529. His novel seems not to have been printed till some years after his death; being first published at Venice, in 1535, under the title of "*La Giulietta*:" there is, however, a *dateless* copy by the same printer. In the dedication to Madonna Lucina Savorgnana, he tells her, that the story was related to him by one of his archers, named *Peregrino*, a native of Verona, while serving in Friuli, to beguile the solitary road that leads from Gradisca to Udine.

Girolamo della Corte, in his History of Verona, relates it circumstantially as a true event, occurring in 1303;* but Maffei does not give him the highest credit as an historian. He carries his history down to the year 1560, and probably adopted the novel to grace his book. The earlier annalists of Verona, and, above all, Torello Sarayna, who published, in 1542, "*Le Historie e Fatti de Veronesi nell Tempi d'il Popolo e Signori Scaligeri*," are entirely silent upon the subject, though some other domestic tragedies grace their narrations.

As to the origin of this interesting story, Mr. Douce has observed, that its material incidents are to be found in the Ephesiacs of Xenophon of Ephesus, a Greek romance of the middle ages: he admits, indeed, that this work was not published nor translated in the time of Luigi da Porto, but suggests that he might have seen a copy of the original in manuscript. Mr. Dunlop, in his History of Fiction, has traced it to the thirty-second novel of Massuccio Salernitano, whose "*Novelino*," a collection of tales, was first printed in 1476. The hero of Massuccio is named Mariotto di Giannozza, and his catastrophe is different; yet there are sufficient points of resemblance between the two narratives. Mr. Boswell observes, that

* Captain Breval, in his Travels, tells us that he was shown at Verona what was called the tomb of these unhappy lovers; and that, on a strict inquiry into the histories of Verona, he found that Shakspeare had varied very little from the truth, either in the names, characters, or other circumstances of this play. The fact seems to be, that the invention of the novelist has been adopted into the popular history of the city, just as Shakspeare's historical dramas furnish numbers with their notions of the events to which they relate.

"we may, perhaps, carry the fiction back to a much greater antiquity, and doubts whether, after all, it is not the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, enlarged and varied by the luxuriant imagination of the novelist."

The story is also to be found in the second volume of the *Novels of Bandello* (Novel ix.); and it is remarkable that he says it was related to him, when at the baths of Caldera, by the Captain Alexander *Peregrino*, a native of Verona; we may presume, the same person from whom Da Porto received it, unless this appropriation is to be considered supposititious. The story also exists in Italian verse; and I had once a glance of a copy of it in that form, but neglected to note the title or date, and had not time for a more particular examination. It was translated from the Italian of Bandello into French, by Pierre Boisteau, who varies from his original in many particulars; and, from the French, Painter gave a translation in the second volume of his *Palace of Pleasure*, 1567, which he entitled *Rhomo and Julietta*. From Boisteau's novel, the same story was, in 1562, formed into an English poem, with considerable alterations and large additions, by Arthur Brooke: this poem the curious reader will find reprinted entire in the variorum editions of Shakspeare. It was originally printed by Richard Tottel, with the following title:—"The Tragical Hystorye of Romeus and Juliet, written first in Italian, by Bandell; and nowe in English, by Ar. Br." Upon this piece Malone has shown, by unequivocal testimony, that the play was formed. Numerous circumstances are introduced from the poem, which the novelist would not have supplied; and even the identity of expression, which not unfrequently occurs, is sufficient to settle the question. Steevens, without expressly controverting the fact, endeavored to throw a doubt upon it by his repeated quotations from the *Palace of Pleasure*. In two passages, it is true, he has quoted Painter, where Brooke is silent; but very little weight belongs to either of them. In one, there is very little resemblance; and in the other, the circumstance might be inferred from the poem, though not exactly specified. The poem of Arthur Brooke was republished in 1587 with the title thus amplified:—"Containing a rare Example of true Constancie: with the subtile Counsell and Practices of an old Fryer, and their ill Event."

In the preface to Arthur Brooke's poem there is a very curious passage, in which he says, "I saw the same argument lately set forth on stage with more commendation then I can looke for, (being there much better set forth then I have or can dooe.)" He has not, however, stated in what country this play was represented: the rude state of our drama, prior to 1562, renders it improbable that it was in England. "Yet (says Mr. Boswell) I cannot but be of opinion that Romeo and Juliet may be added to the list, already numerous, of plays in which our great Poet has had a dramatic precursor, and that some slight remains of the old play are still to be traced in the earliest quarto."

"The story has at all times been eminently popular in all parts of Europe. A Spanish play was formed on it by Lope de Vega, entitled *Los Castelvies y Monteses*; and another in the same language, by Don Francisco de Roxas, under the name of *Los Vandos de Verona*. In Italy, as may well be supposed, it has not been neglected. The modern productions on this subject are too numerous to be specified; but, as early as 1578, Luigi Groto produced a drama upon the subject, called *Hadriana*, of which an analysis may be found in Mr. Walker's Memoir on Italian Tragedy. Groto has stated, in his prologue, that the story is drawn from the ancient history of Adria, his native place;" so that Verona is not the only place that has appropriated this interesting fable.

This has been generally considered one of Shakspeare's earliest plays;* and Schlegel has eloquently said, that "it shines with the colors of the dawn of morning; but a dawn whose purple clouds already announce the thunder of a sultry day." "Romeo and Juliet (says the same admirable critic) is a picture of love and its pitiable fate, in a world whose atmosphere is too rough for this tenderest blossom of human life. Two beings, created for each other, feel mutual love at first glance: every consideration disappears before the irresistible influence of living in one another; they join themselves secretly, under circumstances hostile in the highest degree to their union, relying merely on the protection of an invisible power. By unfriendly events following blow upon blow, their heroic constancy is exposed to all manner of trials; till, forcibly separated from each other, by a voluntary death they are united in the grave, to meet again in another world. All this is to be found in the beautiful story, which Shakspeare has not invented; and which, however simply told, will always excite a tender sympathy: but it was reserved for Shakspeare to unite purity of heart and the glow of imagination, sweetness and dignity of manners and passionate violence, in one ideal picture. By the manner in which he has handled it, it has become a glorious song of praise on that inexpressible feeling which ennobles the soul, and gives to it its highest sublimity, and which elevates even the senses themselves into soul; and at the same time is a melancholy elegy on its frailty from its own nature and external circumstances; at once the deification and the burial of love. It appears here like a heavenly spark, that, descending to the earth, is converted into a flash of lightning, by which mortal creatures are almost in the same

* Malone thinks that the foundation of the play might be laid in 1591, and finished in 1596. Mr. George Chalmers places the date of its composition in the spring of 1592. And Dr. Drake, with greater probability, ascribes it to 1593. There are four early quarto editions, in 1597, 1599, 1609, and one without a date. The first edition is less ample than those which succeed. Shakspeare appears to have revised the play; but in the succeeding impressions no fresh incidents are introduced; the alterations are merely additions to the length of particular speeches and scenes. The principal variations are pointed out in the notes.

moment set on fire and consumed. Whatever is most intoxicating in the odor of a southern spring, languishing in the song of the nightingale, or voluptuous in the first opening of the rose, is to be found in this poem. But, even more rapidly than the earliest blossoms of youth and beauty decay, it hurries on from the first timidly-bold declaration of love and modest return, to the most unlimited passion, to an irrevocable union; then, amidst alternating storms of rapture and despair, to the death of the two lovers, who still appear enviable, as their love survives them, and as by their death they have obtained a triumph over every separating power. The sweetest and the bitterest, love and hatred, festivity and dark forebodings, tender embraces and sepulchres, the fulness of life and self-annihilation, are all here brought close to each other; and all these contrasts are so blended, in the harmonious and wonderful work, into a unity of impression, that the echo, which the whole leaves behind in the mind, resembles a single but endless sigh.

"The excellent dramatic arrangement, the signification of each character in its place, the judicious selection of all the circumstances, even the most minute," have been pointed out by Schlegel in a dissertation referred to in a note at the end of the play; in which he remarks, that "there can be nothing more diffuse, more wearisome, than the rhyming history, which Shakspeare's genius, 'like richest alchymy,' has changed to beauty and to worthiness." Nothing but the delight of seeing into this wonderful metamorphosis, can compensate for the laborious task of reading through more than three thousand six and seven-footed iambs, which, in respect of every thing that amuses, affects, and enraptures us in this play, are as a mere blank leaf.—Here all interest is entirely smothered under the coarse, heavy pretensions of an elaborate exposition. How much was to be cleared away, before life could be breathed into the shapeless mass! In many parts, what is here given, bears the same relation to what Shakspeare has made out of it, which any common description of a thing bears to the thing itself. Thus, out of the following hint—

"A courtier, that eche-where was highly had in pryce,
For he was courteous of his speche and pleasant of devise:
Even as a lyon would among the lambes be bolde,
Such was emonge the bashfull maydes Mercutio to beholde;"

and the addition that the said Mercutio from his swathing-bands constantly had cold hands,—has arisen a splendid character decked out with the utmost profusion of wit. Not to mention a number of nicer deviations from the original, we find also some important incidents; for instance, the meeting and the combat between Paris and Romeo at Juliet's grave.—Shakspeare knew how to transform by enchantment, letters into spirit, a workman's daub into a poetical masterpiece.

"Lessing declared *Romeo and Juliet* to be the only tragedy, that he knew, which Love himself had assisted to compose. I know not (says Schlegel) how to end more gracefully than with these simple words, wherein so much lies:—One may call this poem a harmonious miracle, whose component parts that heavenly power alone could so melt together. It is at the same time enchantingly sweet and sorrowful, pure and glowing, gentle and impetuous, full of elegiac softness, and tragically overpowering."

P R O L O G U E .

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge, break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life;
Whose misadventured, piteous overthrows
Do, with their death, bury their parents' strife.
The fearful passage of their death-marked love,
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

ESCALUS, *Prince of Verona.*

PARIS, *a young Nobleman, Kinsman to the Prince.*

MONTAGUE, } *Heads of Two Houses, at variance with each other.*
CAPULET, }

AN old Man, *Uncle to Capulet.*

ROMEO, *Son to Montague.*

MERCUTIO, *Kinsman to the Prince, and Friend to Romeo.*

BENVOLIO, *Nephew to Montague, and Friend to Romeo.*

TYBALT, *Nephew to Lady Capulet.*

FRIAR LAURENCE, *a Franciscan.*

FRIAR JOHN, *of the same Order.*

BALTHAZAR, *Servant to Romeo.*

SAMPSON, } *Servants to Capulet.*
GREGORY, }

ABRAM, *Servant to Montague.*

AN Apothecary.

THREE Musicians.

CHORUS. BOY, *Page to Paris.* PETER.

AN Officer.

LADY MONTAGUE, *Wife to Montague.*

LADY CAPULET, *Wife to Capulet.*

JULIET, *Daughter to Capulet.*

Nurse to Juliet.

Citizens of Verona ; *several Men and Women, Relations to both Houses ; Maskers, Guards, Watchmen, and Attendants.*

SCENE, *during the greater part of the Play, in Verona ; once, in the Fifth Act, at Mantua.*

ROMEO AND JULIET.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A public Place.*

Enter SAMPSON and GREGORY, armed with swords and bucklers.

Sampson. GREGORY, o' my word, we'll not carry coals.¹

Gre. No, for then we should be colliers.

Sam. I mean, an we be in choler, we'll draw.

Gre. Ay, while you live, draw your neck out of the collar.

Sam. I strike quickly, being moved.

Gre. But thou art not quickly moved to strike.

Sam. A dog of the house of Montague moves me.

Gre. To move, is—to stir; and to be valiant, is—to stand to it. Therefore, if thou art moved, thou run'st away.

Sam. A dog of that house shall move me to stand; I will take the wall of any man or maid of Montague's.

Gre. That shows thee a weak slave; for the weakest goes to the wall.

Sam. True; and therefore women, being the weaker

¹ To carry coals is to put up with insults, to submit to any degradation. Anciently, in great families, the scullions, turnspits, and carriers of wood and coals, were esteemed the very lowest of menials, the drudges of all the rest. Such attendants upon the royal household, in progresses, were called the *black-guard*; and hence the origin of that term.

vessels, are ever thrust to the wall;—therefore I will push Montague's men from the wall, and thrust his maids to the wall.

Gre. The quarrel is between our masters, and us their men.

Sam. 'Tis all one, I will show myself a tyrant: when I have fought with the men, I will be cruel with the maids; I will cut off their heads.

Gre. The heads of the maids?

Sam. Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maiden-heads; take it in what sense thou wilt.

Gre. They must take it in sense, that feel it.

Sam. Me they shall feel, while I am able to stand; and 'tis known I am a pretty piece of flesh.

Gre. 'Tis well thou art not fish; if thou hadst, thou hadst been poor John.¹ Draw thy tool; here comes two of the house of the Montagues.²

Enter ABRAM and BALTHAZAR.

Sam. My naked weapon is out; quarrel, I will back thee.

Gre. How? turn thy back, and run?

Sam. Fear me not.

Gre. No, marry; I fear thee!

Sam. Let us take the law of our sides; let them begin.

Gre. I will frown, as I pass by; and let them take it as they list.

Sam. Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb³ at them; which is a disgrace to them, if they bear it.

¹ *Poor John is hake*, dried and salted.

² It should be observed that the partisans of the Montague family wore a token in their hats, in order to distinguish them from their enemies, the Capulets. Hence, throughout this play, they are known at a distance.

³ This mode of insult, in order to begin a quarrel, seems to have been common in Shakspeare's time. It is not unusual with the Italians at the present day. The manner in which this contemptuous action was performed, is thus described by Cotgrave, in a passage which has escaped the industry of all the commentators:—"Faire la nique: to mocke by nodding or lifting up of the chinne; or more properly, to threaten or defie, by putting the thumbe naile into the mouth, and with a jerke (from the upper teeth) make it to knacke."

Abr. Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

Sam. I do bite my thumb, sir.

Abr. Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

Sam. Is the law on our side, if I say—*ay*?

Gre. No.

Sam. No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir;
but I bite my thumb, sir.

Gre. Do you quarrel, sir?

Abr. Quarrel, sir? no, sir.

Sam. If you do, sir, I am for you; I serve as good
a man as you.

Abr. No better.

Sam. Well, sir.

Enter BENVOLIO, at a distance.

Gre. Say—*better*; here comes one of my master's
kinsmen.¹

Sam. Yes, better, sir.

Abr. You lie.

Sam. Draw, if you be men.—Gregory, remember
thy swashing² blow. [*They fight.*

Ben. Part, fools; put up your swords; you know
not what you do. [*Beats down their swords.*

Enter TYBALT.

Tyb. What, art thou drawn among these heartless
hinds?

Turn thee, Benvolio, look upon thy death.

Ben. I do but keep the peace; put up thy sword,
Or manage it to part these men with me.

Tyb. What, drawn, and talk of peace? I hate the
word,

As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee.

Have at thee, coward.

[*They fight.*

¹ Gregory is a servant of the Capulets; he must therefore mean Tybalt, who enters immediately after Benvolio.

² i. e. *swaggering* or *dashing*.

Enter several partisans of both houses, who join the fray; then enter Citizens, with clubs.

† *Cit.* Clubs, bills, and partisans! strike! beat them down!

Down with the Capulets! down with the Montagues!

Enter CAPULET, in his gown; and LADY CAPULET.

Cap. What noise is this?—Give me my long-sword,¹ ho!

La. Cap. A crutch, a crutch!—Why call you for a sword?

Cap. My sword, I say!—Old Montague is come, And flourishes his blade in spite of me.

Enter MONTAGUE and LADY MONTAGUE.

Mon. Thou villain Capulet,—hold me not, let me go.

La. Mon. Thou shalt not stir one foot to seek a foe.

Enter Prince, with Attendants.

Prin. Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
Profaners of this neighbor-stained steel,—
Will they not hear?—What, ho! you men, you beasts,—
That quench the fire of your pernicious rage
With purple fountains issuing from your veins,
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands
Throw your mistempered² weapons to the ground,
And hear the sentence of your moved prince.—
Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word,
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets,
And made Verona's ancient citizens
Cast by their grave beseeching ornaments,

¹ The *long sword* was the weapon used in active warfare; a lighter weapon was worn for ornament.

² *i. e.* angry.

To wield old partisans, in hands as old,
 Cankered with peace, to part your cankered hate.
 If ever you disturb our streets again,
 Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.
 For this time, all the rest depart away.
 You, Capulet, shall go along with me;
 And, Montague, come you this afternoon,
 To know our further pleasure in this case,
 To old Free-town,¹ our common judgment-place.
 Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.

[*Exeunt Prince, and Attendants; CAPULET,
 LA. CAP., TYBALT, Citizens, and Servants.*]

Mon. Who set this ancient quarrel new abroad?
 Speak, nephew, were you by when it began?

Ben. Here were the servants of your adversary,
 And yours, close fighting ere I did approach.
 I drew to part them; in the instant came
 The fiery Tybalt, with his sword prepared;
 Which, as he breathed defiance to my ears,
 He swung about his head, and cut the winds,
 Who, nothing hurt withal, hissed him in scorn.
 While we were interchanging thrusts and blows,
 Came more and more, and fought on part and part,
 Till the prince came, who parted either part.

La. Mon. O, where is Romeo?—saw you him
 to-day?

Right glad I am he was not at this fray.

Ben. Madam, an hour before the worshipped sun
 Peered forth the golden window of the east,
 A troubled mind drave me to walk abroad;
 Where,—underneath the grove of sycamore,
 That westward rooteth from the city's side,—
 So early walking did I see your son.
 Towards him I made; but he was 'ware of me,
 And stole into the covert of the wood.
 I, measuring his affections by my own,—
 That most are busied when they are most alone,—

¹ The Poet found the name of this place in Brooke's *Tragicall History of Romeus and Juliet*, 1562. It is there said to be the castle of the Capulets.

Pursued my humor, not pursuing his,
And gladly shunned who gladly fled from me.

Mon. Many a morning hath he there been seen,
With tears augmenting the fresh morning's dew,
Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs.
But all so soon as the all-cheering sun
Should in the furthest east begin to draw
The shady curtains from Aurora's bed,
Away from light steals home my heavy son,
And private in his chamber pens himself;
Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out,
And makes himself an artificial night.
Black and portentous must this humor prove,
Unless good counsel may the cause remove.

Ben. My noble uncle, do you know the cause?

Mon. I neither know it, nor can learn of him.

Ben. Have you importuned him by any means?

Mon. Both by myself, and many other friends.
But he, his own affections' counsellor,
Is to himself—~~It~~ will not say, how true—
But to himself so secret and so close,
So far from sounding and discovery,
As is the bud bit with an envious worm,
Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air,
Or dedicate his beauty to the sun.¹
Could we but learn from whence his sorrows grow,
We would as willingly give cure, as know.

Enter ROMEO, at a distance.

Ben. See, where he comes. So please you, step
aside;
I'll know his grievance, or be much denied.

Mon. I would thou wert so happy by thy stay,
To hear true shrift.—Come, madam, let's away.

[*Exeunt MONTAGUE and Lady.*]

¹ The old copy reads:—

“Or dedicate his beauty to the *same*.”

The emendation is by Theobald; who states, with plausibility, that *sunne* might easily be mistaken for *same*.

Ben. Good morrow, cousin.

Rom. Is the day so young?

Ben. But new struck nine.

Rom. Ah me! sad hours seem long.

Was that my father that went hence so fast?

Ben. It was.—What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

Rom. Not having that, which, having, makes them short.

Ben. In love?

Rom. Out—

Ben. Of love?

Rom. Out of her favor, where I am in love.

Ben. Alas, that love, so gentle in his view,
Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof!

Rom. Alas, that love, whose view is muffled still,
Should, without eyes, see pathways to his will!¹
Where shall we dine?—O me!—What fray was here?
Yet tell me not, for I have heard it all.

Here's much to do with hate, but more with love.

Why then, O brawling love! O loving hate!²

O anything, of nothing first create!

O heavy lightness! serious vanity!

Mishapen chaos of well-seeming forms!

Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!

Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!—

This love feel I, that feel no love in this.

Dost thou not laugh?

Ben. No, coz, I rather weep.

Rom. Good heart, at what?

Ben. At thy good heart's oppression.

¹ i. e. should *blindly* and recklessly think he can surmount all obstacles to his will.

² Every ancient sonneteer characterized Love by contraries. Watson begins one of his canzonets—

“Love is a sowre delight, and sugred grieve,
A living death, and ever-dying life,” &c.

Turberville makes Reason harangue against it in the same manner:—

“A fierie frost, a flame that frozen is with ise!
A heavie burden light to beare! A vertue fraught with vice!” &c.

Rom. Why, such is love's transgression.—¹
 Grievs of mine own lie heavy in my breast ;
 Which thou wilt propagate, to have it pressed
 With more of thine : this love, that thou hast shown,
 Doth add more grief to too much of mine own.
 Love is a smoke raised with the fume of sighs ;
 Being urged,² a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes ;
 Being vexed, a sea nourished with lovers' tears.
 What is it else ? a madness most discreet,
 A choking gall, and a preserving sweet.
 Farewell, my coz. [Going.]

Ben. Soft, I will go along ;
 An if you leave me so, you do me wrong.

Rom. Tut, I have lost myself ; I am not here ;
 This is not Romeo ; he's some other where.

Ben. Tell me in sadness,³ whom she is you love.

Rom. What, shall I groan, and tell thee ?

Ben. Groan ? why, no ;

But sadly tell me who.

Rom. Bid a sick man in sadness make his will.

Ah, word ill urged to one that is so ill !

In sadness, cousin, I do love a woman.

Ben. I aimed so near, when I supposed you loved.

Rom. A right good marksman !—And she's fair I love.

Ben. A right fair mark, fair coz, is soonest hit.

Rom. Well, in that hit, you miss : she'll not be hit
 With Cupid's arrow ; she hath Dian's wit ;
 And in strong proof of chastity well armed,
 From love's weak, childish bow she lives unharmed.
 She will not stay the siege of loving terms,
 Nor bide the encounter of assailing eyes,
 Nor ope her lap to saint-seducing gold.
 O, she is rich in beauty ; only poor,
 That, when she dies, with beauty dies her store.⁴

¹ Such is the consequence of unskilful and mistaken kindness.

² The old copy reads, " Being *purged* a fire," &c.—The emendation admitted into the text was suggested by Dr. Johnson. To *urge* the fire is to *kindle* or *excite* it.

³ i. e. in *seriousness*.

⁴ The meaning appears to be, as Mason gives it, " She is poor only, because she leaves no part of her store behind her, as with her, all beauty will die."

Ben. Then she hath sworn, that she will still live chaste?

Rom. She hath, and in that sparing makes huge waste;

For beauty, starved with her severity,
Cuts beauty off from all posterity.
She is too fair, too wise; wisely too fair,
To merit bliss by making me despair.
She hath forsworn to love; and, in that vow,
Do I live dead, that live to tell it now.

Ben. Be ruled by me, forget to think of her.

Rom. O, teach me how I should forget to think.

Ben. By giving liberty unto thine eyes;
Examine other Beauties.

Rom. 'Tis the way
To call hers, exquisite, in question more.¹
These happy masks,² that kiss fair ladies' brows,
Being black, put us in mind they hide the fair;
He that is stricken blind, cannot forget
The precious treasure of his eyesight lost.
Show me a mistress that is passing fair,
What doth her beauty serve, but as a note
Where I may read, who passed that passing fair?
Farewell; thou canst not teach me to forget.

Ben. I'll pay that doctrine, or else die in debt.

[*Exeunt.*]



SCENE II. *A Street.*

Enter CAPULET, PARIS, *and* Servant.

Cap. And Montague is bound as well as I,
In penalty alike; and 'tis not hard, I think,
For men so old as we to keep the peace.

Par. Of honorable reckoning are you both;

¹ i. e. to call her exquisite beauty more into my mind, and make it more the subject of conversation.

² This means no more than *the happy masks*, according to a form of expression not unusual with the old writers.

And pity 'tis, you lived at odds so long.
But now, my lord, what say you to my suit?

Cap. But saying o'er what I have said before.
My child is yet a stranger in the world;
She hath not seen the change of fourteen years;
Let two more summers wither in their pride,
Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride.

Par. Younger than she are happy mothers made.

Cap. And too soon marred are those so early made.¹
The earth hath swallowed all my hopes but she;
She is the hopeful lady of my earth.²
But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart,
My will to her consent is but a part;³
An she agree, within her scope of choice,
Lies my consent and fair-according voice.
This night I hold an old accustomed feast,
Whereto I have invited many a guest,
Such as I love; and you, among the store,
One more, most welcome, makes my number more.
At my poor house, look to behold this night
Earth-treading stars, that make dark heaven light.
Such comfort, as do lusty young men⁴ feel
When well-apparell'd April on the heel
Of limping winter treads, even such delight
Among fresh female buds shall you this night
Inherit⁵ at my house; hear all, all see,
And like her most, whose merit most shall be;
Which, on more view of many, mine being one,⁶
May stand in number, though in reckoning none.

¹ The quarto of 1597 reads:—

“And too soon *marred* are those so early *married*.”

² *Fille de terre* is the old French phrase for an *heiress*; but Mason suggests that *earth* may here mean corporal part, as again in this play—

“Can I go forward, when my heart is here?

Turn back, dull *earth*, and find thy centre out.”

³ i. e. in comparison to.

⁴ For “lusty young men” Johnson would read “lusty yeomen.” Ritson has clearly shown that *young men* was used for *yeomen* in our elder language.

⁵ To *inherit*, in the language of Shakspeare, is to *possess*.

⁶ By a perverse adherence to the first quarto copy of 1597, which reads, “Such amongst view of many,” &c., this passage has been made unin-

Come, go with me.—Go, sirrah, trudge about
Through fair Verona; find those persons out,
Whose names are written there, [*Gives a paper,*] and
to them say,

My house and welcome on their pleasure stay.

[*Exeunt CAPULET and PARIS.*]

Serv. Find them out, whose names are written here? ¹
It is written—that the shoemaker should meddle with
his yard,—and the tailor with his last, the fisher with
his pencil, and the painter with his nets; but I am
sent to find those persons, whose names are here writ,
and can never find what names the writing person hath
here writ. I must to the learned.—In good time.

Enter BENVOLIO and ROMEO.

Ben. Tut, man! one fire burns out another's burning,
One pain is lessened by another's anguish;
Turn giddy, and be help by backward turning;
One desperate grief cures with another's languish.
Take thou some new infection to thy eye,
And the rank poison of the old will die.

Rom. Your plantain-leaf is excellent for that. ²

Ben. For what, I pray thee?

Rom. For your broken skin.

Ben. Why, Romeo, art thou mad?

telligible. The subsequent quartos and the folio read, "Which one [on] more," &c., evidently meaning, "Hear all, see all, and like her most who has the most merit; *her*, which, after regarding attentively the many, my daughter being one, may stand *unique* in merit, though she may be reckoned nothing, or held in no estimation. The allusion, as Malone has shown, is to the old proverbial expression, "*One* is no number." It will be unnecessary to inform the reader that *which* is here used for *who*, a substitution frequent in Shakspeare, as in all the writers of his time. One of the later quartos has corrected the error of the others, and reads as in the present text:—

"Which *on* more view," &c.

¹ The quarto of 1597 adds, "And yet I know not who are written here; I must to the learned to learn of them: that's as much as to say, the tailor," &c.

² The *plantain-leaf* is a blood-stancher, and was formerly applied to green wounds. So in Albumazar:—

"Help, Armellina, help! I'm fallen i' the cellar:
Bring a fresh *plantain-leaf*; I've broke my shin."

Rom. Not mad, but bound more than a madman is;
Shut up in prison, kept without my food,
Whipped and tormented, and—Good-e'en, good fellow.

Serv. God gi' good e'en—I pray, sir, can you read?

Rom. Ay, mine own fortune in my misery.

Serv. Perhaps you have learned it without book.
But, I pray, can you read any thing you see?

Rom. Ay, if I know the letters, and the language.

Serv. Ye say honestly; rest you merry!

Rom. Stay, fellow; I can read. [*Reads.*

Signior Martino, and his wife and daughters; County Anselme, and his beauteous sisters; The lady widow of Vitruvio; Signior Placentio, and his lovely nieces; Mercutio, and his brother Valentine; Mine uncle Capulet, his wife, and daughters; My fair niece Rosaline; Livia; Signior Valentio, and his cousin Tybalt; Lucio, and the lively Helena.

A fair assembly. [*Gives back the note.*] Whither should they come?

Serv. Up.

Rom. Whither?

Serv. To supper; to our house.

Rom. Whose house?

Serv. My master's.

Rom. Indeed, I should have asked you that before.

Serv. Now I'll tell you without asking. My master is the great rich Capulet; and if you be not of the house of Montagues, I pray, come and crush a cup of wine.¹ Rest you merry. [*Exit.*

Ben. At this same ancient feast of Capulet's
Supps the fair Rosaline, whom thou so lov'st;
With all the admired beauties of Verona.
Go thither; and, with unattainted eye,
Compare her face with some that I shall show,
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

¹ This cant expression seems to have been once common; it often occurs in old plays.

Rom. When the devout religion of mine eye
Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires !
And these,—who, often drowned, could never die,—
Transparent heretics, be burnt for liars !
One fairer than my love ! the all-seeing sun
Ne'er saw her match, since first the world begun.

Ben. Tut ! you saw her fair, none else being by,
Herself poised with herself in either eye ;
But in those crystal scales, let there be weighed
Your lady's love¹ against some other maid
That I will show you, shining at this feast,
And she shall scant show well, that now shows best.

Rom. I'll go along, no such sight to be shown,
But to rejoice in splendor of mine own. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *A Room in Capulet's House.*²

Enter LADY CAPULET and Nurse.

La. Cap. Nurse, where's my daughter ? call her
forth to me.

Nurse. Now, by my maidenhead at twelve year old,
I bade her come.—What, lamb ! what, lady-bird !—
God forbid !—where's this girl ? what, Juliet !

Enter JULIET.

Jul. How now ; who calls ?

Nurse. Your mother.

Jul. Madam, I am here ;

What is your will ?

La. Cap. This is the matter.—Nurse, give leave
awhile,

¹ Heath says, "*Your lady's love*, is the love you bear to your lady, which, in our language, is commonly used for the lady herself." Perhaps we should read, "*Your lady love*."

² In all the old copies the greater part of this scene was printed as prose. Capell was the first who exhibited it as verse ; the subsequent editors have followed him, but perhaps erroneously.

We must talk in secret—Nurse, come back again,
I have remembered me, thou shalt hear our counsel.
Thou know'st my daughter's of a pretty age.

Nurse. 'Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour.

La. Cap. She's not fourteen.

Nurse. I'll lay fourteen of my teeth,
And yet, to my teen¹ be it spoken, I have but four.—
She is not fourteen. How long is it now
To Lammas-tide?

La. Cap. A fortnight, and odd days.

Nurse. Even or odd, of all days in the year,
Come Lammas-eve at night, shall she be fourteen.
Susan and she—God rest all Christian souls!—
Were of an age.—Well, Susan is with God;
She was too good for me. But, as I said,
On Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen;
That shall she, marry; I remember it well.
'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years;
And she was weaned,—I never shall forget it,—
Of all the days of the year, upon that day;
For I had then laid wormwood to my dug,
Sitting in the sun under the dove-house wall,
My lord and you were then at Mantua.—
Nay, I do bear a brain;—but, as I said,
When it did taste the wormwood on the nipple
Of my dug, and felt it bitter, pretty fool!
To see it tetchy, and fall out with the dug,
Shake, quoth the dove-house; 'twas no need, I trow,
To bid me trudge.

And since that time it is eleven years;
For then she could stand alone; nay, by the rood,
She could have run and waddled all about,
For even the day before, she broke her brow;
And then my husband—God be with his soul!
'A was a merry man;—took up the child.
Yea, quoth he, dost thou fall upon thy face?
Thou wilt fall backward, when thou hast more wit;
Wilt thou not, Jule? and, by my holy-dam,

¹ i. e. to my sorrow.

The pretty wretch left crying, and said—*Ay*.
To see now, how a jest shall come about !
I warrant, an I should live a thousand years,
I never should forget it ; *Wilt thou not, Jule ?* quoth he :
And, pretty fool, it stinted,¹ and said—*Ay*.

La. Cap. Enough of this ; I pray thee, hold thy peace.

Nurse. Yes, madam ; yet I cannot choose but² laugh,

To think it should leave crying, and say—*Ay*.

And yet, I warrant, it had upon its brow

A bump as big as a young cock'rel's stone ;

A parlous knock, and it cried bitterly.

Yea, quoth my husband, *fall'st upon thy face ?*

Thou wilt fall backward, when thou com'st to age ;

Wilt thou not, Jule ? It stinted, and said—*Ay*.

Jul. And stint thou too, I pray thee, nurse, say I.

Nurse. Peace, I have done. God mark thee to his grace !

Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed ;

An I might live to see thee married once,

I have my wish.

La. Cap. Marry, that marry is the very theme
I came to talk of.—Tell me, daughter Juliet,
How stands your disposition to be married ?

Jul. It is an honor that I dream not of.

Nurse. An honor ! were not I thine only nurse,
I'd say thou hadst sucked wisdom from thy teat.

La. Cap. Well, think of marriage now ; younger
than you,

Here in Verona, ladies of esteem,

Are made already mothers ; by my count,

I was your mother much upon these years

That you are now a maid. Thus, then, in brief ;—

The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.

Nurse. A man, young lady ! Lady, such a man,
As all the world—Why, he's a man of wax.³

¹ To stint is to stop.

² This tautologous speech is not in the first quarto of 1597.

³ I. e. as well made as if he had been modelled in wax.

La. Cap. Verona's summer hath not such a flower.

Nurse. Nay, he's a flower; in faith, a very flower.¹

La. Cap. What say you? can you love the gentleman?

This night you shall behold him at our feast;
Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face,
And find delight writ there with beauty's pen;
Examine every married² lineament,

And see how one another lends content;
And what obscured in this fair volume lies,
Find written in the margin of his eyes.³

This precious book of love, this unbound lover,
To beautify him, only lacks a cover.

The fish lives in the sea;⁴ and 'tis much pride,
For fair without the fair within to hide.

That book in many's eyes doth share the glory,
That in gold clasps locks in the golden story;

So shall you share all that he doth possess,
By having him, making yourself no less.

Nurse. No less? nay, bigger; women grow by men.

La. Cap. Speak briefly, can you like of Paris' love?

Jul. I'll look to like, if looking liking move;

But no more deep will I endart⁵ mine eye,
Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, the guests are come, supper served up, you called, my young lady asked for, the nurse

¹ After this speech of the nurse, lady Capulet, in the old quarto, says only:—

“Well, Juliet, how like you of Paris' love?”

She answers, “I'll look to like,” &c.; and so concludes the scene.

² Thus the quarto of 1599. The quarto of 1609 and the folio read, *several* lineaments.

³ The comments on ancient books were generally printed in the margin.

⁴ Dr. Farmer explains this, “The fish is *not yet caught*.” Fish-skin covers to books anciently were not uncommon.

⁵ The quarto of 1597 reads *engage* mine eye.

cursed in the pantry, and every thing in extremity.
I must hence to wait ; I beseech you, follow straight.

La. Cap. We follow thee.—Juliet, the county stays.

Nurse. Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *A Street.*

Enter ROMEO, MERCUTIO,¹ BENVOLIO, with five or six maskers, torch-bearers, and others.

Rom. What, shall this speech be spoke for our excuse ?

Or shall we on without apology ?

Ben. The date is out of such prolixity.²
We'll have no Cupid hood-winked with a scarf,
Bearing a Tartar's painted bow of lath,³
Scaring the ladies like a crow-keeper ;⁴
Nor no without-book prologue, faintly spoke
After the prompter for our entrance ;
But, let them measure us by what they will,
We'll measure them a measure, and be gone.

Rom. Give me a torch.⁵—I am not for this ambling.
Being but heavy, I will bear the light.

Mer. Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

Rom. Not I, believe me ; you have dancing shoes,
With nimble soles ; I have a soul of lead,
So stakes me to the ground, I cannot move.

Mer. You are a lover ; borrow Cupid's wings,
And soar with them above a common bound.

Rom. I am too sore enpierced with his shaft,

¹ Shakspeare appears to have formed this character on the following slight hint:—"Another gentleman, called Mercutio, which was a court-like gentleman, very well beloved of all men, and by reason of his pleasant and courteous behavior was in all companies well entertained."—*Painter's Palace of Pleasure*, tom. ii. p. 221.

² "Introductory speeches are out of date or fashion."

³ The Tartarian bows resemble, in their form, the old Roman or Cupid's bow, such as we see on medals and bass-relief.

⁴ See *King Lear*, Act iv. Sc. 6.

⁵ A torch-bearer was a constant appendage to every troop of maskers. To hold a torch was anciently no degrading office.

To soar with his light feathers ; and so bound,
I cannot bound a pitch above dull woe
Under love's heavy burden do I sink.

Mer. And, to sink in it, should you burden love ;
Too great oppression for a tender thing.

Rom. Is love a tender thing ? It is too rough,
Too rude, too boisterous ; and it pricks like thorn.

Mer. If love be rough with you, be rough with love ;
Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down.—
Give me a case to put my visage in.

[*Putting on a mask.*

A visor for a visor !—What care I,
What curious eye doth quote¹ deformities ?
Here are the beetle-brows, shall blush for me.

Ben. Come, knock, and enter ; and no sooner in,
But every man betake him to his legs.

Rom. A torch for me. Let wantons, light of heart,
Tickle the senseless rushes² with their heels ;
For I am proverbied with a grandsire phrase,—
I'll be a candle-holder,³ and look on,—
The game was ne'er so fair, and I am done.

Mer. Tut ! dun's the mouse, the constable's own
word.

If thou art dun, we'll draw thee from the mire⁴
Of this (save reverence) love, wherein thou stick'st
Up to the ears.—Come, we burn daylight,⁵ ho.

Rom. Nay, that's not so.

¹ To *quote* is to *note*, to *mark*.

² It has been before observed, that the apartments of our ancestors were strewed with rushes ; and so, it seems, was the ancient stage.

³ To *hold the candle* is a common proverbial expression for being an idle spectator. There is another old prudential maxim subsequently alluded to, which advises to *give over* when the game is at the fairest.

⁴ *Dun is the mouse*, is a proverbial saying, to us of vague signification, alluding to the color of the mouse, but frequently employed with no other intent than that of quibbling on the word *done*. Why it is attributed to a constable we know not. To *draw dun out of the mire* was a rural pastime, in which *dun* meant a dun horse, supposed to be stuck in the mire, and sometimes represented by one of the persons who played, at others, by a log of wood. Mr. Gifford has described the game at which he remembers often to have played, in a note to Ben Jonson's *Masque of Christmas*, vol. vii. p. 282.

⁵ This proverbial phrase was applied to superfluous actions in general.

Mer. I mean, sir, in delay
We waste our lights in vain, like lamps by day.
Take our good meaning ; for our judgment sits
Five times in that, ere once in our five wits.¹

Rom. And we mean well, in going to this mask ;
But 'tis no wit to go.

Mer. Why, may one ask ?

Rom. I dreamt a dream to-night.

Mer. And so did I.

Rom. Well, what was yours ?

Mer. That dreamers often lie.

Rom. In bed, asleep, while they do dream things
true.

Mer. O, then, I see, queen Mab hath been with you.
She is the fairies' midwife ;² and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the fore-finger of an alderman,³
Drawn with a team of little atomies⁴
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep :
Her wagon-spokes made of long spinners' legs ;
The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers ;
The traces, of the smallest spider's web ;
The collars, of the moonshine's watery beams :
Her whip, of cricket's bone ; the lash, of film :
Her wagoner, a small, gray-coated gnat,
Not half so big as a round little worm
Pricked from the lazy finger of a maid :
Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut,
Made by the joiner squirrel, or old grub,
Time out of mind the fairies' coach-makers.
And in this state she gallops night by night
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love :
On courtiers' knees, that dream on court'sies straight :

¹ The quarto of 1597 reads, "*Three times a-day ;*" and *right wits* instead of *five wits*.

² The *fairies' midwife* does not mean the midwife to the fairies, but that she was the person *among* the fairies whose department it was to deliver the fancies of sleeping men of their dreams, those *children of an idle brain*. Warburton reads, "*the fancy's midwife*."

³ The quarto of 1597 has "*of a burgomaster*." The citizens of Shakespeare's time appear to have worn this ornament on the thumb.

⁴ *Atomies* for *atoms*.

O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees :
O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream ;
Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,
Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are.
Sometime she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,¹
And then dreams he of smelling out a suit :²
And sometimes comes she with a tithe-pig's tail,
Tickling a parson's nose as 'a lies asleep ;
Then dreams he of another benefice :
Sometime she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,³
Of healths five fathom deep ; and then anon
Drums in his ear ; at which he starts and wakes ;
And being thus frightened, swears a prayer or two,
And sleeps again. This is that very Mab,
That plats the manes of horses in the night ;
And bakes the elf-locks⁴ in foul, sluttish hairs,
Which, once untangled, much misfortune bodes.
This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs,
That presses them, and learns them first to bear,
Making them women of good carriage.
This, this is she—

Rom. Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace ;
Thou talk'st of nothing.

Mer. True, I talk of dreams ;
Which are the children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy ;
Which is as thin of substance as the air ;
And more inconstant than the wind, who wooes
Even now the frozen bosom of the north,
And, being angered, puffs away from thence,
Turning his face to the dew-dropping south.

¹ This speech received much alteration after the first edition in the quarto of 1597 ; and Shakspeare has inadvertently introduced the *courtier* twice.

² A place in court.

³ The quarto of 1597 reads, "counter mines." Spanish blades were held in high esteem. A sword was called a *Toledo*, from the excellency of the Toledan steel.

⁴ i. e. *fairy locks*, locks of hair clotted and tangled in the night.

Ben. This wind, you talk of, blows us from ourselves;
Supper is done, and we shall come too late.

Rom. I fear too early; for my mind misgives,
Some consequence, yet hanging in the stars,
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
With this night's revels; and expire¹ the term
Of a despised life, closed in my breast,
By some vile forfeit of untimely death.
But He, that hath the steerage of my course,
Direct my sail! On, lusty gentlemen.

Ben. Strike, drum.²

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.³ *A Hall in Capulet's House. Musicians waiting.*

Enter Servants.

1 *Serv.* Where's Potpan, that he helps not to take away? He shift a trencher!⁴ he scrape a trencher!

2 *Serv.* When good manners shall lie all in one or two men's hands, and they unwashed too, 'tis a foul thing.

1 *Serv.* Away with the joint-stools, remove the court-cupboard,⁵ look to the plate.—Good thou, save me a piece of marchpane;⁶ and, as thou lovest me, let the porter let in Susan Grindstone and Nell.—Antony! and Potpan!

2 *Serv.* Ay, boy; ready.

¹ So in *The Rape of Lucrece* :—

“An expired date cancelled ere well begun.”

² Here the folio adds :—“*They march about the stage, and serving-men come forth with their napkins.*”

³ This scene is not in the first copy in the quarto of 1597.

⁴ To *shift a trencher* was technical. Trenchers were used in Shakespeare's time, and long after, by persons of good fashion and quality.

⁵ The *court-cupboard* was the ancient sideboard, whereon the plate was displayed at festivals.

⁶ *Marchpane* was a constant article in the desserts of our ancestors. It was a sweet cake, composed of filberts, almonds, pistachoes, pine-kernels, and sugar of roses, with a small portion of flour. They were often made in fantastic forms. In 1562, the Stationers' Company paid “for ix. marchpaynes xxvi. s. viii. d.”

1 *Serv.* You are looked for, and called for, asked for, and sought for, in the great chamber.

2 *Serv.* We cannot be here and there too.—Cheerly, boys; be brisk awhile, and the longer liver take all.

[*They retire behind.*]

Enter CAPULET, &c. with the guests and the maskers.

Cap. Gentlemen, welcome! Ladies, that have their toes

Unplagued with corns, will have a bout with you.—

Ah ha, my mistresses! which of you all

Will now deny to dance? She that makes dainty she, I'll swear hath corns: am I come near you now?

You are welcome, gentlemen! I have seen the day,

That I have worn a visor; and could tell

A whispering tale in a fair lady's ear,

Such as would please;—'tis gone, 'tis gone, 'tis gone.

You are welcome, gentlemen!—Come, musicians, play.

A hall! a hall!¹ give room, and foot it, girls.

[*Music plays, and they dance.*]

More lights, ye knaves; and turn the tables up,²

And quench the fire; the room is grown too hot.—

Ah, sirrah, this unlooked-for sport comes well.

Nay, sit, nay, sit, good cousin³ Capulet;

For you and I are past our dancing days.

How long is't now, since last yourself and I

Were in a mask?

2 *Cap.* By'r lady, thirty years.

1 *Cap.* What, man! 'tis not so much, 'tis not so much:

'Tis since the nuptial of Lucentio,

Come Pentecost as quickly as it will,

Some five-and-twenty years; and then we masked.

¹ An exclamation commonly used to make room in a crowd for any particular purpose.

² The ancient *tables* were flat leaves or *boards* joined by hinges and placed on tressels; when they were to be removed, they were therefore *turned up*.

³ *Cousin* was a common expression for *kinsman*.

2 *Cap.* 'Tis more, 'tis more ; his son is elder, sir ;
His son is thirty.

1 *Cap.* Will you tell me that ?
His son was but a ward two years ago.¹

Rom. What lady's that, which doth enrich the hand
Of yonder knight ?

Serv. I know not, sir.

Rom. O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright !
It seems she ² hangs upon the cheek of night
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear ;
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear !
So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,
As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows ;
The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand,
And, touching hers, make happy my rude hand.
Did my heart love till now ? forswear it, sight !
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

Tyb. This, by his voice, should be a Montague ;—
Fetch me my rapier, boy.—What ! dares the slave
Come hither, covered with an antic face,
To fleer and scorn at our solemnity ?
Now, by the stock and honor of my kin,
To strike him dead I hold it not a sin.

1 *Cap.* Why, how now, kinsman ? wherefore storm
you so ?

Tyb. Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe ;
A villain, that is hither come in spite,
To scorn at our solemnity this night.

1 *Cap.* Young Romeo is't ?

Tyb. 'Tis he ; that villain Romeo.

1 *Cap.* Content thee, gentle coz, let him alone ;
He bears him like a portly gentleman ;
And, to say truth, Verona brags of him,
To be a virtuous and well-governed youth.

¹ This speech stands thus in the quarto of 1597 :—

“ Will you tell me that ? it cannot be so :
His son was but a ward three years ago :
Good youths, i' faith !—O youth's a jolly thing ! ”

² Steevens reads, with the second folio :—

“ Her beauty hangs upon,” &c.

I would not for the wealth of all this town,
Here in my house, do him disparagement ;
Therefore be patient, take no note of him ;
It is my will ; the which if thou respect,
Show a fair presence, and put off these frowns,
An ill-beseeming semblance for a feast.

Tyb. It fits, when such a villain is a guest ;
I'll not endure him.

1 Cap. He shall be endured ;
What, Goodman boy ?—I say, he shall.—Go to ;—
Am I the master here, or you ? go to.
You'll not endure him !—God shall mend my soul—
You'll make a mutiny among my guests !
You will set cock-a-hoop ! you'll be the man !

Tyb. Why, uncle, 'tis a shame.

1 Cap. Go to, go to.
You are a saucy boy.—Is't so, indeed ?—
This trick may chance to scath¹ you ;—I know what.
You must contrary me ! marry, 'tis time—
Well said, my hearts.—You are a princox ;² go :—
Be quiet, or—More light, more light, for shame !—
I'll make you quiet. What ! cheerly, my hearts.

Tyb. Patience perforce³ with wilful choler meeting,
Makes my flesh tremble in their different greeting.

I will withdraw ; but this intrusion shall,
Now seeming sweet, convert to bitter gall. [*Exit.*

Rom. If I profane with my unworthy hand
[*To Juliet.*

This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this—
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.
Jul. Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too
much,

Which mannerly devotion shows in this ;
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
And palm to palm, is holy palmers' kiss.

¹ i. e. do you an injury. The word has still this meaning in Scotland.

² A pert, forward youth. The word is apparently a corruption of the Latin *præcox*.

³ There is an old adage—"Patience perforce is a medicine for a mad dog."

Rom. Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

Jul. Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

Rom. O then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;
They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

Jul. Saints do not move, though grant for prayers'
sake.

Rom. Then move not, while my prayer's effect
I take.

Thus from my lips, by yours, my sin is purged.

[*Kissing her.*¹

Jul. Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

Rom. Sin from my lips? O trespass sweetly
urged.

Give me my sin again.

Jul. You kiss by the book.

Nurse. Madam, your mother craves a word with
you.

Rom. What is her mother?

Nurse. Marry, bachelor!

Her mother is the lady of the house,
And a good lady, and a wise, and virtuous.
I nursed her daughter, that you talked withal;
I tell you,—he that can lay hold of her,
Shall have the chinks.

Rom. Is she a Capulet?

O dear account! my life is my foe's debt.

Ben. Away, begone; the sport is at the best.

Rom. Ay, so I fear; the more is my unrest.

1 Cap. Nay, gentlemen, prepare not to be gone:

We have a trifling foolish banquet towards.²—

Is it e'en so? Why, then I thank you all;

I thank you, honest gentlemen;³ good night.—

More torches here!—Come on, then let's to bed.

¹ The Poet here, without doubt, copied from the mode of his own time; and kissing a lady in a public assembly, we may conclude, was not then thought indecorous.

² *Towards* is ready, at hand.

³ Here the quarto of 1597 adds:—

“I promise you, but for your company,
I would have been in bed an hour ago:
Light to my chamber, ho!”

Ah, sirrah, [*To 2 Cap.*] by my fay, it waxes late ;
I'll to my rest. [*Exeunt all but JULIET and Nurse.*

Jul. Come hither, nurse ; what is yon gentleman ?

Nurse. The son and heir of old Tiberio.

Jul. What's he that now is going out of door ?

Nurse. Marry, that, I think, be young Petruchio.

Jul. What's he that follows there, that would not dance ?

Nurse. I know not.

Jul. Go ask his name ;—if he be married,
My grave is like to be my wedding bed.

Nurse. His name is Romeo, and a Montague,
The only son of your great enemy.

Jul. My only love, sprung from my only hate !
Too early seen unknown, and known too late !
Prodigious birth of love it is to me,
That I must love a loathed enemy.

Nurse. What's this ? what's this ?

Jul. A rhyme I learned even now
Of one I danced withal. [*One calls within, Juliet.*

Nurse. Anon, anon :—
Come, let's away ; the strangers all are gone.

[*Exeunt.*

*Enter CHORUS.*¹

Now old Desire doth in his deathbed lie,
And young Affection gapes to be his heir ;
That fair,² which Love groaned for, and would die,
With tender Juliet matched, is now not fair.
Now Romeo is beloved, and loves again,
Alike bewitched by the charm of looks ;
But to his foe supposed he must complain,
And she steal Love's sweet bait from fearful hooks.

¹ This chorus is not in the first edition, quarto, 1597.

² *Fair*, it has been already observed, was formerly used as a substantive, and was synonymous with *beauty*. The old copies read :—

“That fair *for* which love groaned for,” &c.

This reading Malone defends ; Steevens treats it as a corruption.

Being held a foe, he may not have access
To breathe such vows as lovers use to swear ;
And she as much in love, her means much less
To meet her new-beloved any where.
But Passion lends them power, Time, means to ~~meet~~,
Tempering extremities with extreme sweet. [Exit.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *An open Place adjoining Capulet's Garden.*

Enter ROMEO.

Rom. Can I go forward, when my heart is here ?
Turn back, dull earth, and find thy centre out.
[*He climbs the wall, and leaps down within it.*

Enter BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO.

Ben. Romeo ! my cousin Romeo !

Mer. He is wise ;
And, on my life, hath stolen him home to bed.
Ben. He ran this way, and leaped this orchard wall.

Call, good Mercutio.

Mer. Nay, I'll conjure, too.—
Romeo ! humors ! madman ! passion ! lover !
Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh,
Speak but one rhyme, and I am satisfied ;
Cry but—Ah me ! pronounce¹ but—love and dove ;
Speak to my gossip Venus one fair word,

¹ This is the reading of the quarto of 1597. Those of 1599 and 1609, and the folio, read *provaunt*, an evident corruption. The folio of 1632 has *couply*, meaning *couple*, which has been the reading of many modern editions.

One nickname for her purblind son and heir,
 Young Adam Cupid, he that shot so trim,¹
 When king Cophetua loved the beggar-maid.—
 He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moveth not;
 The ape² is dead, and I must conjure him.—
 I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes,
 By her high forehead, and her scarlet lip,
 By her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh,
 And the demesnes that there adjacent lie,
 That in thy likeness thou appear to us.

Ben. An if he hear thee, thou wilt anger him.

Mer. This cannot anger him; 'twould anger him
 To raise a spirit in his mistress' circle
 Of some strange nature, letting it there stand
 Till she had laid it, and conjured it down;
 That were some spite. My invocation
 Is fair and honest, and in his mistress' name,
 I conjure only but to raise up him.

Ben. Come, he hath hid himself among those trees,
 To be consort³ed with the humorous³ night.
 Blind is his love, and best befits the dark.

Mer. If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.
 Now will he sit under a medlar tree,
 And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit,
 As maids call medlars, when they laugh alone.⁴—
 Romeo, good night;—I'll to my truckle-bed;
 This field-bed is too cold for me to sleep.
 Come, shall we go?

Ben. Go, then; for 'tis in vain
 To seek him here, that means not to be found.

[*Exeunt.*]

¹ All the old copies read, *Abraham* Cupid. The alteration was proposed by Mr. Upton. It evidently alludes to the famous archer *Adam* Bell. The ballad alluded to is King Cophetua and the Beggar-Maid, or, as it is called in some copies, "The Song of a Beggar and a King." It may be seen in the first volume of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*.

² This phrase, in Shakspeare's time, was used as an expression of tenderness, like *poor fool*, &c.

³ i. e. the *humid*, the moist, *dewy* night. Chapman uses the word in this sense in his translation of Homer.

⁴ After this line in the old copies are two lines of ribaldry.

SCENE II. Capulet's Garden.

*Enter ROMEO.**Rom.* He jests at scars, that never felt a wound.¹*[JULIET appears above, at a window.*

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou her maid art far more fair than she.Be not her maid,² since she is envious;
Her vestal livery is but sick and green,
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.—

It is my lady; O, it is my love!

O that she knew she were!—

She speaks, yet she says nothing; what of that?

Her eye discourses, I will answer it.

I am too bold; 'tis not to me she speaks:

Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.

What if her eyes were there, they in her head?

The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,

As daylight doth a lamp; her eye in heaven

Would through the airy region stream so bright,

That birds would sing, and think it were not night.

See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!

O that I were a glove upon that hand,

That I might touch that cheek!

Jul.

Ah me!

Rom.

She speaks.—

O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art
As glorious to this sight,³ being o'er my head,
As is a winged messenger of heaven
Unto the white-upturned, wondering eyes¹ That is, Mercutio jests, whom he has overheard.² I. e. be not a votary to the moon, to Diana.³ The old copies read, "to this night." Theobald made the emendation.

Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him,
When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds,
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

Jul. O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father, and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

Rom. Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

[*Aside.*]

Jul. 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;—
Thou art thyself though, not a Montague.
What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? That which we call a rose,
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes,
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name;
And for that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

Rom. I take thee at thy word.
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

Jul. What man art thou, that, thus bescreened in
night,
So stumblest on my counsel?

Rom. By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am.
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
Because it is an enemy to thee;
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

Jul. My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words
Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound;
Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

Rom. Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.¹

Jul. How cam'st thou hither, tell me? and where-
fore?

¹ i. e. *displease*.

The orchard walls are high, and hard to climb;
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

Rom. With love's light wings did I o'erperch these
walls;

For stony limits cannot hold love out;
And what love can do, that dares love attempt;
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let¹ to me.

Jul. If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

Rom. Alack! there lies more peril in thine eye,
Than twenty of their swords; look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity.

Jul. I would not for the world they saw thee here.

Rom. I have night's cloak to hide me from their
sight;

And, but² thou love me, let them find me here.
My life were better ended by their hate,
Than death prorogued,³ wanting of thy love.

Jul. By whose direction found'st thou out this
place?

Rom. By Love, who first did prompt me to inquire;
He lent me counsel, and I lent him eyes.
I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far
As that vast shore washed with the furthest sea,
I would adventure for such merchandise.

Jul. Thou know'st, the mask of night is on my
face;

Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek,
For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night.
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny
What I have spoke; but farewell compliment!⁴
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say—Ay;
And I will take thy word; yet, if thou swear'st,
Thou mayst prove false; at lovers' perjuries,
They say, Jove laughs.⁵ O gentle Romeo,

¹ i. e. no *stop*, no hinderance. Thus the quarto of 1597. The subsequent copies read, "no *stop* to me."

² *But* is here again used in its exceptive sense, *without* or *unless*.

³ i. e. *postponed*.

⁴ i. e. farewell attention to forms.

⁵ This Shakespeare found in Ovid's *Art of Love*.

If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully.—
 Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,
 I'll frown, and be perverse, and say thee nay,
 So thou wilt woo; but, else, not for the world.
 In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond;
 And therefore thou mayst think my havior light:
 But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
 Than those that have more cunning to be strange.¹
 I should have been more strange, I must confess,
 But that thou overheard'st, ere I was ware,
 My true love's passion. Therefore pardon me;
 And not impute this yielding to light love,
 Which the dark night hath so discovered.

Rom. Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear,
 That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops,—

Jul. O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,
 That monthly changes in her circled orb,
 Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

Rom. What shall I swear by?

Jul. Do not swear at all;
 Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
 Which is the god of my idolatry,
 And I'll believe thee.

Rom. If my heart's dear love—

Jul. Well, do not swear. Although I joy in thee,
 I have no joy of this contract to-night.
 It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden;
 Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be,
 Ere one can say—*It lightens.*² Sweet, good night!
 This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
 May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
 Good night, good night! As sweet repose and rest
 Come to thy heart, as that within my breast!

Rom. O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

Jul. What satisfaction canst thou have to-night?

Rom. The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

¹ To be *distant* or *shy*.

² All the intermediate lines from "*Sweet, good night!*" to "*Stay but a little,*" &c. were added after the first impression in 1597.

Jul. I gave thee mine before thou didst request it ;
And yet I would it were to give again.

Rom. Wouldst thou withdraw it ? For what purpose,
love ?

Jul. But to be frank, and give it thee again.
And yet I wish but for the thing I have.
My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep ; the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite.

[*Nurse calls within.*

I hear some noise within ; dear love, adieu !
Anon, good nurse !—Sweet Montague, be true.
Stay but a little, I will come again.

[*Exit.*

Rom. O blessed, blessed night ! I am afeard,
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

Re-enter JULIET, above.

Jul. Three words, dear Romeo, and good night,
indeed.

If that thy bent of love be honorable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow,
By one that I'll procure to come to thee,
Where, and what time, thou wilt perform the rite ;
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay,
And follow thee, my lord, throughout the world.

Nurse. [*Within.*] Madam !

Jul. I come anon.—But if thou mean'st not well,
I do beseech thee,——

Nurse. [*Within.*] Madam !

Jul. By and by, I come :—
To cease thy suit, and leave me to my grief :
To-morrow will I send.

Rom. So thrive my soul,——

Jul. A thousand times good night ! [*Exit.*

Rom. A thousand times the worse, to want thy
light.—

Love goes toward love, as school-boys from their books ;
But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.

[*Retiring slowly.*

Re-enter JULIET, above.

Jul. Hist! Romeo, hist!—O, for a falconer's voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle¹ back again!
Bondage is hoarse, and may not speak aloud;
Else would I tear the cave where echo lies,
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine
With repetition of my Romeo's name.

Rom. It is my soul, that calls upon my name;
How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending ears!

Jul. Romeo!

Rom. My sweet!²

Jul. At what o'clock to-morrow
Shall I send to thee?

Rom. At the hour of nine.

Jul. I will not fail; 'tis twenty years till then.
I have forgot why I did call thee back.

Rom. Let me stand here till thou remember it.

Jul. I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
Remembering how I love thy company.

Rom. And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget,
Forgetting any other home but this.

Jul. 'Tis almost morning; I would have thee gone;
And yet no further than a wanton's bird;
Who lets it hop a little from her hand,
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,
And with a silk thread plucks it back again,
So loving-jealous of his liberty.

Rom. I would I were thy bird.

Jul. Sweet, so would I;
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.

¹ The *tassel*, or tiercel (for so it should be spelled), is the male of the *goshawk*, and is said to be so called because it is a *tierce* or *third* less than the female. This is equally true of all birds of prey. This species of hawk had the epithet of *gentle* annexed to it, from the ease with which it was tamed, and its attachment to man.

² The quarto of 1597 puts the cold, distant, and formal appellation *Madam*, into the mouth of Romeo.—The two subsequent quartos and the folio have "my niece." "My sweet" is the reading of the second folio.

Good night, good night! parting is such sweet sorrow;
That I shall say, *Good night*, till it be morrow. [*Exit.*

Rom. Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy
breast!—

'Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!
Hence will I to my ghostly father's cell;
His help to crave, and my dear hap to tell. [*Exit.*

SCENE III. Friar Laurence's Cell.

Enter FRIAR LAURENCE, with a basket.

Fri. The gray-eyed morn smiles on the frowning
night,¹

Checkering the eastern clouds with streaks of light;
And flecked² darkness like a drunkard reels
From forth day's path-way, made by Titan's wheels.³
Now, ere the sun advance his burning eye,
The day to cheer, and night's dank dew to dry,
I must fill up this osier cage of ours,
With baleful weeds, and precious-juiced flowers.
The earth, that's nature's mother, is her tomb;
What is her burying grave, that is her womb;
And from her womb children of divers kind
We sucking on her natural bosom find;
Many for many virtues excellent,
None but for some, and yet all different.
O, mickle is the powerful grace⁴ that lies
In herbs, plants, stones, and their true qualities;
For nought so vile that on the earth doth live,
But to the earth some special good doth give;
Nor aught so good, but, strained from that fair use,
Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse.

¹ In the folio, and the three later quartos, these four lines are printed twice over, and given once to Romeo and once to the friar.

² *Flecked* is spotted, dappled, streaked, or variegated.

³ This is the reading of the second folio. The quarto of 1597 reads:—

“From forth day's path *and* Titan's *firy* wheels.”

The quarto of 1599, and the folio, have “*burning* wheels.”

⁴ *Efficacious* virtue.

Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied ;
And vice sometime's by action dignified.
Within the infant rind of this small flower,
Poison hath residence, and med'cine power ;
For this, being smelt, with that part¹ cheers each part ;
Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart.
Two such opposed foes encamp them still
In man as well as herbs, grace, and rude will ;
And, where the worser is predominant,
Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.

Enter ROMEO.

Rom. Good morrow, father !

Fri. *Benedicite !*

What early tongue so sweet saluteth me ?—
Young son, it argues a distempered head,
So soon to bid good morrow to thy bed.
Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye,
And where care lodges, sleep will never lie ;
But where unbruised youth with unstuffed brain
Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign.
Therefore thy earliness doth me assure,
Thou art uproused by some distemperature ;
Or if not so, then here I hit it right—
Our Romeo hath not been in bed to-night.

Rom. That last is true, the sweeter rest was mine.

Fri. God pardon sin ! wast thou with Rosaline ?

Rom. With Rosaline, my ghostly father ? No ;
I have forgot that name, and that name's woe.

Fri. That's my good son ; but where hast thou
been, then ?

Rom. I'll tell thee, ere thou ask it me again.
I have been feasting with mine enemy ;
Where, on a sudden, one hath wounded me,
That's by me wounded ; both our remedies
Within thy help and holy physic lies.²

¹ i. e. with its odor.

² In the Anglo-Saxon and very old English, the third person plural of the present tense ends in *eth*, and often familiarly in *es*, as might be

I bear no hatred, blessed man ; for, lo,
My intercession likewise steads my foe.

Fri. Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift ;
Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.

Rom. Then plainly know, my heart's dear love is set
On the fair daughter of rich Capulet.

As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine ;
And all combined, save what thou must combine
By holy marriage. When, and where, and how,
We met, we wooed, and made exchange of vow,
I'll tell thee as we pass ; but this I pray,
That thou consent to marry us this day.

Fri. Holy saint Francis ! what a change is here !
Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear,
So soon forsaken ? Young men's love then lies
Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.

Jesu Maria ! what a deal of brine

Hath washed thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline !

How much salt water thrown away in waste,
To season love, that of it doth not taste !

The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,

Thy old groans ring yet in my ancient ears ;

Lo, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit

Of an old tear that is not washed off yet.

If e'er thou wast thyself, and these woes thine,

Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline ;

And art thou changed ? pronounce this sentence then—
Women may fall, when there's no strength in men.

Rom. Thou chid'st me oft for loving Rosaline.

Fri. For doting, not for loving, pupil mine.

Rom. And bad'st me bury love.

Fri.

Not in a grave,

To lay one in, another out to have.

Rom. I pray thee, chide not. She, whom I love now,
Doth grace for grace, and love for love allow ;
The other did not so.

Fri.

O, she knew well,

Thy love did read by rote, and could not spell.

exemplified from Chaucer and others. This idiom was not worn out in
Shakespeare's time.

But come, young waverer, come, go with me ;
In one respect I'll thy assistant be ;
For this alliance may so happy prove,
To turn your households' rancor to pure love.

Rom. O, let us hence ; I stand on sudden haste.¹

Fri. Wisely, and slow ; they stumble that run fast.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *A Street.*

Enter BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO.

Mer. Where the devil should this Romeo be ?—
Came he not home to-night ?

Ben. Not to his father's ; I spoke with his man.

Mer. Ah, that same pale hard-hearted wench, that
Rosaline,

Torments him so, that he will sure run mad.

Ben. Tybalt, the kinsman of old Capulet,
Hath sent a letter to his father's house.

Mer. A challenge, on my life.

Ben. Romeo will answer it.

Mer. Any man, that can write, may answer a letter.

Ben. Nay, he will answer the letter's master, how
he dares, being dared.

Mer. Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead ! Stabbed
with a white wench's black eye ; shot thorough the ear
with a love-song ; the very pin of his heart cleft with
the blind bow-boy's butt-shaft.² And is he a man to
encounter Tybalt ?

Ben. Why, what is Tybalt ?

Mer. More than prince of cats,³ I can tell you.
O, he is the courageous captain of compliments. He
fights as you sing prick-song, keeps time, distance,

¹ "It is incumbent upon me, or it is of importance to me, to use extreme haste."

² The allusion is to archery. The clout, or white mark, at which the arrows were directed, was fastened by a black pin, placed in the centre of it. To hit this, was the highest ambition of every marksman.

³ *Tybert*, the name given to a cat, in the old story-book of *Renard the Fox*.

and proportion ; rests me his minim rest, one, two, and the third in your bosom ; the very butcher of a silk button,¹ a duellist, a duellist ; a gentleman of the very first house,—of the first and second cause.² Ah, the immortal passado ! the punto reverso ! the hay !³

Ben. The what ?

Mer. The pox of such antic, lipping, affecting fantasticoes ; these new tuners of accents !—*By Jesu, a very good blade !—a very tall man—a very good whore !*—Why, is not this a lamentable thing, grand-sire,⁴ that we should be thus afflicted with these strange flies, these fashion-mongers, these *pardonnez-moys*, who stand so much on the new form, that they cannot sit at ease on the old bench ?⁵ O, their *bons*, their *bons* !

Enter ROMEO.

Ben. Here comes Romeo, here comes Romeo.

Mer. Without his roe, like a dried herring.—O flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified !—Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch flow'd in ; Laura, to his lady, was but a kitchen wench ;—marry, she had a better love to be-rhyme her : Dido, a dowdy ; Cleopatra, a gypsy ; Helen and Hero, hildings and harlots ; Thisbe, a gray eye or so,⁶ but not to the purpose.—Seignior Romeo, *bon jour* ! there's a French salutation to your French slop.⁷ You gave us the counterfeit fairly last night.

¹ So in the Return from Parnassus :—

“ Strikes his poinado at a *button's* breadth.”

² i. e. one who understands the whole science of quarrelling, and will tell you of the *first cause*, and the *second cause*, for which a man is to fight. The clown, in *As You Like It*, talks of the *seventh cause*, in the same sense.

³ All the terms of the fencing-school were originally Italian ; the rapier being first used in Italy. The *hay* is the word *hai*, you have it, used when a thrust reaches the antagonist.

⁴ Apostrophizing his ancestors, whose sober times were unacquainted with the fopperies here complained of.

⁵ During the ridiculous fashion which prevailed, of great “boulstered breeches,” it is said, that it was necessary to cut away hollow places in the benches of the house of commons, to make room for those monstrous protuberances, without which those *who stood on the new form* could not sit at ease on the old bench.

⁶ A *gray eye* appears to have meant what we now call a *blue eye*.

⁷ The *slop* was a kind of wide-kneed breeches, or rather trousers.

Rom. Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give you?

Mer. The slip, sir, the slip. Can you not conceive?

Rom. Pardon, good Mercutio, my business was great; and, in such a case as mine, a man may strain courtesy.

Mer. That's as much as to say—such a case as yours constrains a man to bow in the hams.

Rom. Meaning—to courtesy.

Mer. Thou hast most kindly hit it.

Rom. A most courteous exposition.

Mer. Nay, I am the very pink of courtesy.

Rom. Pink for flower.

Mer. Right.

Rom. Why, then is my pump well flowered.¹

Mer. Well said. Follow me this jest now, till thou hast worn out thy pump; that, when the single sole of it is worn, the jest may remain, after the wearing, solely singular.

Rom. O single-soled² jest, solely singular for the singleness.

Mer. Come between us, good Benvolio; my wits fail.

Rom. Switch and spurs, switch and spurs; or I'll cry a match.

Mer. Nay, if thy wits run the wild-goose chase,³ I have done; for thou hast more of the wild-goose in one of thy wits, than, I am sure, I have in my whole five. Was I with you there for the goose?

Rom. Thou wast never with me for any thing, when thou wast not there for the goose.

Mer. I will bite thee by the ear for that jest.

Rom. Nay, good goose, bite not.

¹ Here is a vein of wit too thin to be easily found. The fundamental idea is, that Romeo wore *pinked* pumps; that is, punched with holes in figures. It was the custom to wear ribands in the shoes, formed in the shape of roses or other flowers.

² *Single-soled* means *simple*, silly. "He is a good *sengyll soule*, and can do no harm; *est doli nescius non simplex*."—*Horman's Vulgaria*.

³ One kind of horse-race, which resembled the flight of *wild-geese*, was formerly known by this name.—Two horses were started together, and whichever rider could get the lead, the other rider was obliged to follow him wherever he chose to go.

Mer. Thy wit is a very bitter sweeting;¹ it is a most sharp sauce.

Rom. And is it not well served in to a sweet goose?

Mer. O, here's a wit of cheverel,² that stretches from an inch narrow to an ell broad!

Rom. I stretch it out for that word—broad; which, added to the goose, proves thee, far and wide, a broad goose.

Mer. Why, is not this better now than groaning for love? Now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo; now art thou what thou art, by art as well as by nature; for this drivelling love is like a great natural, that runs lolling up and down to hide his bawble in a hole.

Ben. Stop there, stop there.

Mer. Thou desirest me to stop in my tale against the hair.³

Ben. Thou wouldst else have made thy tale large.

Mer. O, thou art deceived; I would have made it short; for I was come to the whole depth of my tale; and meant, indeed, to occupy the argument no longer.

Rom. Here's goodly gear!

Enter Nurse and PETER.

Mer. A sail, a sail, a sail!

Ben. Two, two; a shirt, and a smock.

Nurse. Peter!

Peter. Anon!

Nurse. My fan, Peter.⁴

Mer. 'Pr'ythee, do, good Peter, to hide her face; for her fan's the fairer of the two.

Nurse. God ye good morrow, gentlemen.

Mer. God ye good den,⁵ fair gentlewoman.

¹ The allusion is to an apple of that name.

² Soft, stretching leather; kid leather.

³ This phrase, which is of French extraction, *à contre poil*, occurs again in *Troilus and Cressida*:—"Merry against the hair."

⁴ The business of Peter carrying the nurse's fan, seems ridiculous to modern manners; but it was formerly the practice.

⁵ i. e. "God give you a good even." The first of these contractions is common in our old dramas.

Nurse. Is it good den?

Mer. 'Tis no less, I tell you; for the bawdy hand of the dial is now upon the prick of noon.

Nurse. Out upon you! what a man are you?

Rom. One, gentlewoman, that God hath made himself to mar.

Nurse. By my troth, it is well said.—For himself to mar, quoth 'a?—Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I may find the young Romeo?

Rom. I can tell you; but young Romeo will be older when you have found him, than he was when you sought him. I am the youngest of that name, for 'fault of a worse.

Nurse. You say well.

Mer. Yea, is the worst well? Very well took, i'faith; wisely, wisely.

Nurse. If you be he, sir, I desire some confidence with you.

Ben. She will indite him to some supper.

Mer. A bawd, a bawd, a bawd! So ho!

Rom. What hast thou found?

Mer. No hare, sir; unless a hare, sir, in a lenten pie, that is something stale and hoar ere it be spent.

*An old hare hoar,¹
And an old hare hoar,
Is very good meat in Lent;
But a hare that is hoar,
Is too much for a score,
When it hoars ere it be spent.—*

Romeo, will you come to your father's? We'll to dinner thither.

Rom. I will follow you.

Mer. Farewell, ancient lady; farewell, lady, lady, lady.² [*Exeunt MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO.*]

¹ *Hoar* or *hoary* is often used for *mouldy*, as things grow white from moulding. These lines seem to have been part of an old song. In the quarto, 1597, we have this stage direction: "*He walks by them* [i. e. the nurse and Peter], *and sings.*"

² The burden of an old song. See *Twelfth Night*, Act ii. Sc. 3.

Nurse. Marry, farewell!—I pray you, sir, what saucy merchant was this, that was so full of his ropery?¹

Rom. A gentleman, nurse, that loves to hear himself talk; and will speak more in a minute, than he will stand to in a month.

Nurse. An 'a speak any thing against me, I'll take him down an 'a were lustier than he is, and twenty such Jacks; and if I cannot, I'll find those that shall. Scurvy knave! I am none of his flirt-gills; I am none of his skains-mates.²—And thou must stand by too, and suffer every knave to use me at his pleasure?

Pet. I saw no man use you at his pleasure; if I had, my weapon should quickly have been out, I warrant you. I dare draw as soon as another man, if I see occasion in a good quarrel, and the law on my side.

Nurse. Now, afore God, I am so vexed, that every part about me quivers. Scurvy knave!—'Pray you, sir, a word; and, as I told you, my young lady bade me inquire you out; what she bade me say, I will keep to myself; but first let me tell ye, if ye should lead her into a fool's paradise, as they say, it were a very gross kind of behavior, as they say; for the gentlewoman is young; and, therefore, if you should deal double with her, truly, it were an ill thing to be offered to any gentlewoman, and very weak dealing.

Rom. Nurse, commend me to thy lady and mistress. I protest unto thee,——

Nurse. Good heart! and i' faith, I will tell her as much. Lord, Lord, she will be a joyful woman.

Rom. What wilt thou tell her, nurse? thou dost not mark me.

Nurse. I will tell her, sir,—that you do protest; which, as I take it, is a gentlemanlike offer.

Rom. Bid her devise some means to come to shrift This afternoon;

¹ *Ropery* was anciently used in the same sense as *roguery* is now.

² By *skains-mates* the old lady probably means *swaggering companions*. A *skain*, or *skain*, was an Irish knife or dagger, a weapon suitable to the purpose of ruffling fellows.

And there she shall, at friar Laurence' cell,
Be shrived, and married. Here is for thy pains.

Nurse. No, truly, sir; not a penny.

Rom. Go to; I say you shall.

Nurse. This afternoon, sir? well, she shall be there.

Rom. And stay, good nurse, behind the abbey wall:
Within this hour my man shall be with thee;
And bring thee cords made like a tackled stair,¹
Which to the high top-gallant of my joy
Must be my convoy in the secret night.
Farewell!—Be trusty, and I'll quit thy pains.
Farewell!—Commend me to thy mistress.

Nurse. Now God in heaven bless thee!—Hark you,
sir.

Rom. What say'st thou, my dear nurse?

Nurse. Is your man secret? Did you ne'er hear
say—

Two may keep counsel, putting one away?

Rom. I warrant thee; my man's as true as steel.

Nurse. Well, sir; my mistress is the sweetest lady,—Lord, Lord!—when 'twas a little prating thing,—O,—there's a nobleman in town, one Paris, that would fain lay knife aboard; but she, good soul, had as lieve see a toad, a very toad, as see him. I anger her sometimes, and tell her that Paris is the properer man; but, I'll warrant you, when I say so, she looks as pale as any clout in the varsal world. Doth not rosemary and Romeo begin both with a letter?²

Rom. Ay, nurse; what of that? both with an R.

Nurse. Ah, mocker! that's the dog's name. R is for the dog. No; I know it begins with some other

¹ i. e. like stairs of rope in the tackle of a ship. A stair, for a flight of stairs, is still the language of Scotland, and was once common to both kingdoms.

² The nurse is represented as a prating, silly creature; she says that she will tell Romeo a good joke about his mistress, and asks him whether rosemary and Romeo do not both begin with a letter: he says yes, an R. She, who, we must suppose, could not read, thought he mocked her, and says, No, sure I know better, R is the dog's name; yours begins with some other letter. This is natural enough, and in character. Ben Jonson, in his English Grammar, says, "*R is the dog's letter, and hirreth in the sound.*"

letter ; and she hath the prettiest sententious of it, of you and rosemary, that it would do you good to hear it.

Rom. Commend me to thy lady. [*Exit.*

Nurse. Ay, a thousand times.—Peter !

Pet. Anon !

Nurse. Peter, take my fan, and go before. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. Capulet's Garden.

Enter JULIET.

Jul. The clock struck nine, when I did send the nurse ;

In half an hour she promised to return.

Perchance, she cannot meet him : that's not so.—

O, she is lame ! Love's heralds should be thoughts,¹

Which ten times faster glide than the sun's beams,

Driving back shadows over lowering hills ;

Therefore do nimble-pinioned doves draw love,

And therefore hath the wind-swift Cupid wings.

Now is the sun upon the highmost hill

Of this day's journey ; and from nine till twelve

Is three long hours,—yet she is not come.

Had she affections, and warm, youthful blood,

She'd be as swift in motion as a ball ;

My words would bandy her to my sweet love,

And his to me.

But old folks, many feign as they were dead ;

Unwieldy, slow, heavy and pale as lead.

¹ The speech is thus continued in the quarto, 1597 :—

“ ——— should be thoughts,
And run more swift than hasty powder fired
Doth hurry from the fearful cannon's mouth.
Oh, now she comes ! Tell me, gentle nurse,
What says my love ? ”

The greatest part of this scene is likewise added since that edition. Shakespeare, however, seems to have thought one of the ideas comprised in the foregoing quotation, from the earliest quarto, too valuable to be lost. He has, therefore, inserted it in Romeo's first speech to the apothecary, in Act v. :—

“ As violently as hasty powder fired
Doth hurry from the fatal cannon's womb.”

Enter Nurse and PETER.

O God, she comes!—O honey nurse, what news?
Hast thou met with him? Send thy man away.

Nurse. Peter, stay at the gate. [*Exit PETER.*]

Jul. Now, good sweet nurse,—O Lord! why
look'st thou sad?

Though news be sad, yet tell them merrily;
If good, thou sham'st the music of sweet news
By playing it to me with so sour a face.

Nurse. I am weary; give me leave awhile;—
Fie, how my bones ache! What a jaunt have I had!

Jul. I would thou had'st my bones, and I thy news.
Nay, come, I pray thee, speak;—good, good nurse, speak.

Nurse. Jesu, what haste? Can you not stay
awhile?

Do you not see that I am out of breath?

Jul. How art thou out of breath, when thou hast
breath

To say to me—that thou art out of breath?
The excuse, that thou dost make in this delay,
Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse.
Is thy news good, or bad? answer to that;
Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance.
Let me be satisfied. Is't good or bad?

Nurse. Well, you have made a simple choice; you
know not how to choose a man. Romeo! no, not he;
though his face be better than any man's, yet his leg
excels all men's; and for a hand, and a foot, and a
body,—though they be not to be talked on, yet they
are past compare. He is not the flower of courtesy,—
but, I'll warrant him, as gentle as a lamb.—Go thy
ways, wench; serve God.—What, have you dined at
home?

Jul. No, no. But all this I did know before;
What says he of our marriage? what of that?

Nurse. Lord, how my head aches! what a head
have I!

It beats as it would fall in twenty pieces.
My back o' t' other side,—O, my back, my back!—

Beshrew your heart for sending me about,
To catch my death with jaunting up and down!

Jul. I' faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.
Sweet, sweet, sweet nurse, tell me, what says my
love?

Nurse. Your love says like an honest gentleman,
And a courteous, and a kind, and a handsome,
And, I warrant, a virtuous,—where is your mother?

Jul. Where is my mother?—Why, she is within;
Where should she be? How oddly thou repliest?

*Your love says like an honest gentleman,—
Where is your mother?*

Nurse. O, God's lady dear!
Are you so hot? Marry, come up, I trow;
Is this the poultice for my aching bones?
Henceforward do your messages yourself.

Jul. Here's such a coil,—come, what says Romeo?

Nurse. Have you got leave to go to shrift to-day?

Jul. I have.

Nurse. Then hie you hence to friar Laurence' cell;
There stays a husband to make you a wife.
Now comes the wanton blood up in your cheeks;
They'll be in scarlet straight at any news.
Hie you to church; I must another way,
To fetch a ladder, by the which your love
Must climb a bird's nest soon, when it is dark.
I am the drudge, and toil in your delight;
But you shall bear the burden soon at night.
Go, I'll to dinner; hie you to the cell.

Jul. Hie to high fortune!—Honest nurse, farewell.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI. Friar Laurence's Cell.

*Enter FRIAR LAURENCE and ROMEO.*¹

Fri. So smile the Heavens upon this holy act,
That after-hours with sorrow chide us not!

¹ This scene is exhibited in quite another form in the first quarto, 1597.
The reader may see it in the *variorum Shakspeare*.

Rom. Amen, amen! But come what sorrow can,
It cannot countervail the exchange of joy
That one short minute gives me in her sight.
Do thou but close our hands with holy words,
Then love-devouring death do what he dare:
It is enough I may but call her mine.

Fri. These violent delights have violent ends,
And in their triumph die! like fire and powder,
Which, as they kiss, consume. The sweetest honey
Is loathsome in his own deliciousness,
And in the taste confounds the appetite.
Therefore love moderately: long love doth so;
Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.¹

Enter JULIET.

Here comes the lady;—O, so light a foot
Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint.²
A lover may bstride the gossamers
That idle in the wanton summer air,
And yet not fall; so light is vanity.

Jul. Good night to my ghostly confessor.

Fri. Romeo shall thank thee, daughter, for us both.

Jul. As much to him, else are his thanks too much.

Rom. Ah, Juliet, if the measure of thy joy
Be heaped like mine, and that thy skill be more
To blazon it, then sweeten with thy breath
This neighbor air, and let rich music's tongue
Unfold the imagined happiness that both
Receive in either by this dear encounter.

Jul. Conceit,³ more rich in matter than in words,
Brags of his substance, not of ornament.
They are but beggars that can count their worth;

¹ "Precipitation produces mishap."

² This passage originally stood thus:—

"Youth's love is quick, swifter than swiftest speed,
See where she comes!—
So light a foot ne'er hurts the trodden flower;
Of love and joy, see, see, the sovereign power!"

³ *Conceit* here means *imagination*. Vide *Hamlet*, Act iii. Sc. 4.

But my true love is grown to such excess,
I cannot sum up half my sum of wealth.

Fri. Come, come with me, and we will make short
work ;

For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone,
Till holy church incorporate two in one. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I. *A public Place.*

Enter MERCUTIO, BENVOLIO, Page, and Servants.

Ben. I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire ;
The day is hot,¹ the Capulets abroad,
And, if we meet, we shall not 'scape a brawl ;
For now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring.

Mer. Thou art like one of those fellows, that when
he enters the confines of a tavern, claps me his sword
upon the table, and says, *God send me no need of thee!*
and, by the operation of the second cup, draws it on
the drawer, when, indeed, there is no need.

Ben. Am I like such a fellow ?

Mer. Come, come, thou art as hot a Jack in thy
mood as any in Italy ; and as soon moved to be moody,
and as soon moody to be moved.

Ben. And what to ?

Mer. Nay, an there were two such, we should have
none shortly, for one would kill the other. Thou !
why thou wilt quarrel with a man that hath a hair more,
or a hair less, in his beard, than thou hast. Thou wilt
quarrel with a man for cracking nuts, having no other
reason but because thou hast hazel eyes. What eye,

¹ It is observed, that, in Italy, almost all assassinations are committed during the heat of summer.

but such an eye, would spy out such a quarrel? Thy head is as full of quarrels, as an egg is full of meat; and yet thy head hath been beaten as addle as an egg, for quarrelling. Thou hast quarrelled with a man for coughing in the street, because he hath wakened thy dog that hath lain asleep in the sun. Didst thou not fall out with a tailor for wearing his new doublet before Easter? with another, for tying his new shoes with old riband? and yet thou wilt tutor me from quarrelling?

Ben. An I were so apt to quarrel as thou art, any man should buy the fee simple of my life for an hour and a quarter.

Mer. The fee simple? O simple!¹

Enter TYBALT and others.

Ben. By my head, here come the Capulets.

Mer. By my heel, I care not.

Tyb. Follow me close, for I will speak to them. Gentlemen, good den; a word with one of you.

Mer. And but one word with one of us? Couple it with something; make it a word and a blow.

Tyb. You will find me apt enough to that, sir, if you will give me occasion.

Mer. Could you not take some occasion without giving?

Tyb. Mercutio, thou consortest with Romeo,—

Mer. Consort!² What, dost thou make us minstrels? an thou make minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but discords. Here's my fiddlestick; here's that shall make you dance. 'Zounds, consort!

Ben. We talk here in the public haunt of men. Either withdraw into some private place,
Or reason coldly of your grievances,
Or else depart; here all eyes gaze on us.

¹ This and the foregoing speech have been added since the first quarto, with some few circumstances in the rest of the scene, as well as in the ensuing one.

² *Consort* was the old term for a set or company of musicians.

Mer. Men's eyes were made to look, and let them gaze;
I will not budge for no man's pleasure, I.

Enter ROMEO.

Tyb. Well, peace be with you, sir! Here comes my man.

Mer. But I'll be hanged, sir, if he wear your livery! Marry, go before to the field, he'll be your follower; Your worship, in that sense, may call him—man.

Tyb. Romeo, the hate I bear thee, can afford No better term than this—Thou art a villain.

Rom. Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee Doth much excuse the appertaining rage To such a greeting.—Villain am I none; Therefore farewell. I see thou know'st me not.

Tyb. Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries That thou hast done me; therefore turn, and draw.

Rom. I do protest, I never injured thee; But love thee better than thou canst devise, Till thou shalt know the reason of my love: And so, good Capulet,—which name I tender As dearly as mine own,—be satisfied.

Mer. O calm, dishonorable, vile submission!

*A la stoccata*¹ carries it away.

[*Draws.*

Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk?

Tyb. What wouldst thou have with me?

Mer. Good king of cats,² nothing but one of your nine lives; that I mean to make bold withal, and, as you shall use me hereafter, dry-beat the rest of the eight. Will you pluck your sword out of his pilcher³ by the ears? Make haste, lest mine be about your ears ere it be out.

Tyb. I am for you.

[*Drawing.*

¹ The Italian term for a thrust or stab with a rapier.

² Alluding to his name. See Act ii. Sc. 4.

³ Warburton says, that we should read *pilche*, which signifies a coat or covering of skin or leather; meaning the scabbard. A *pilche* or leathern coat seems to have been the common dress of a carman. The old copy reads *scabbard*.

Rom. Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up.

Mer. Come, sir, your passado. [They fight.]

Rom. Draw, Benvolio;

Beat down their weapons.—Gentlemen, for shame

Forbear this outrage.—Tybalt—Mercutio—

The prince expressly hath forbid this bandying

In Verona streets.—Hold, Tybalt;—good Mercutio.

[Exeunt TYBALT and his partisans.]

Mer. I am hurt;—

A plague o' both the houses!—I am sped.—

Is he gone, and hath nothing?

Ben. What, art thou hurt?

Mer. Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch; marry, 'tis enough.—

Where is my page!—Go, villain, fetch a surgeon.

[Exit Page.]

Rom. Courage, man; the hurt cannot be much.

Mer. No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve; ask for me to-morrow, and you shall find me a grave man.¹ I am peppered, I warrant, for this world.—A plague o' both your houses!—Zounds, a dog, a rat, a mouse, a cat, to scratch a man to death! a braggart, a rogue, a villain, that fights by the book of arithmetic!—Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm.

Rom. I thought all for the best.

Mer. Help me into some house, Benvolio,
Or I shall faint.—A plague o' both your houses!
They have made worm's meat of me;
I have it, and soundly too.—Your houses!

[Exeunt MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO.]

¹ After this, the quarto, 1597, continues Mercutio's speech as follows—

“ — A pox o' both your houses! I shall be fairly mounted upon four men's shoulders for your house of the Montagues and the Capulets: and then some peasantry rogue, some sexton, some base slave, shall write my epitaph, that Tybalt came and broke the prince's laws, and Mercutio was slain for the first and second cause. Where's the surgeon?

“ *Boy.* He's come, sir.

“ *Mer.* Now he'll keep a mumbling in my guts on the other side.—Come, Benvolio, lend me thy hand: a pox o' both your houses!”

Rom. This gentleman, the prince's near ally,
My very friend, hath got his mortal hurt
In my behalf; my reputation stained
With Tybalt's slander; Tybalt, that an hour
Hath been my kinsman.—O sweet Juliet,
Thy beauty hath made me effeminate,
And in my temper softened valor's steel.

Re-enter BENVOLIO.

Ben. O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio's dead;
That gallant spirit hath aspired¹ the clouds,
Which too untimely here did scorn the earth.

Rom. This day's black fate on more days doth
depend;²
This but begins the woe, others must end.

Re-enter TYBALT.

Ben. Here comes the furious Tybalt back again.

Rom. Alive! in triumph! and Mercutio slain!
Away to heaven, respective lenity,³
And fire-eyed fury be my conduct⁴ now!—
Now, Tybalt, take the *villain* back again,
That late thou gav'st me; for Mercutio's soul
Is but a little way above our heads,
Staying for thine to keep him company;
Either thou, or I, or both, must go with him.

Tyb. Thou, wretched boy, that didst consort him
here,
Shalt with him hence.

Rom. This shall determine that.

[*They fight; TYBALT falls.*

Ben. Romeo, away, be gone!

¹ We never use the verb *aspire* without some particle, as *to* and *after*. There are numerous ancient examples of a similar use of it with *that* in the text.

² This day's unhappy destiny *hangs over* the days yet to come. There will yet be more mischief.

³ "*Respective*" is "considerative."

⁴ *Conduct* for *conductor*.

The citizens are up, and Tybalt slain.
Stand not amazed;—the prince will doom thee death
If thou art taken:—hence!—be gone!—away!

Rom. O! I am fortune's fool!¹

Ben. Why dost thou stay?
[*Exit* ROMEO.]

Enter Citizens, &c.

1 *Cit.* Which way ran he that killed Mercutio?
Tybalt, that murderer, which way ran he?

Ben. There lies that Tybalt.

1 *Cit.* Up, sir, go with me;
I charge thee in the prince's name, obey.

Enter Prince, attended; MONTAGUE, CAPULET, *their*
wives, and others.

Prin. Where are the vile beginners of this fray?

Ben. O noble prince, I can discover all
The unlucky manage of this fatal brawl.
There lies the man, slain by young Romeo,
That slew thy kinsman, brave Mercutio.

La. Cap. Tybalt, my cousin!—O my brother's
child!

Unhappy sight! ah me, the blood is spilled
Of my dear kinsman!—Prince, as thou art true,²
For blood of ours, shed blood of Montague.
O cousin, cousin!

Prin. Benvolio, who began this bloody fray?

Ben. Tybalt, here slain, whom Romeo's hand did
slay.

Romeo, that spoke him fair, bade him bethink
How nice³ the quarrel was, and urged withal
Your high displeasure.—All this—uttered
With gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bowed—
Could not take truce with the unruly spleen
Of Tybalt, deaf to peace, but that he tilts

¹ In the first quarto, "O! I am fortune's slave."

² As thou art *just* and *upright*.

³ *Nice* here means *silly, trifling, or wanton*.

With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast ;
Who, all as hot, turns deadly point to point,
And, with a martial scorn, with one hand beats
Cold death aside, and with the other sends
It back to Tybalt, whose dexterity
Retorts it. Romeo, he cries aloud,
Hold, friends! friends, part! and, swifter than his
tongue,

His agile arm beats down their fatal points,
And 'twixt them rushes ; underneath whose arm
An envious thrust from Tybalt hit the life
Of stout Mercutio, and then Tybalt fled ;
But by and by comes back to Romeo,
Who had but newly entertained revenge,
And to't they go like lightning ; for, ere I
Could draw to part them, was stout Tybalt slain ;
And, as he fell, did Romeo turn and fly.
This is the truth, or let Benvolio die.

La. Cap. He is a kinsman to the Montague.
Affection makes him false ; he speaks not true.
Some twenty of them fought in this black strife,
And all those twenty could but kill one life.
I beg for justice, which thou, prince, must give ;
Romeo slew Tybalt, Romeo must not live.

Prin. Romeo slew him, he slew Mercutio ;
Who now the price of his dear blood doth owe ?

Mon. Not Romeo, prince ; he was Mercutio's
friend ;
His fault concludes but, what the law should end,
The life of Tybalt.

Prin. And, for that offence,
Immediately we do exile him hence :
I have an interest in your hates' proceeding,
My blood for your rude brawls doth lie a-bleeding ;
But I'll amerce you with so strong a fine,
That you shall all repent the loss of mine.
I will be deaf to pleading and excuses ;
Nor tears, nor prayers, shall purchase out abuses,
Therefore use none ; let Romeo hence in haste,
Else, when he's found, that hour is his last.

Bear hence this body, and attend our will ;
 Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill.¹

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *A Room in Capulet's House.*

Enter JULIET.

Jul. Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
 Towards Phœbus' mansion ; such a wagoner
 As Phaeton would whip you to the west,
 And bring in cloudy night immediately.²—
 Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night !
 That runaway's eyes may wink ;³ and Romeo
 Leap to these arms, untalked of, and unseen !—
 Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
 By their own beauties ; or, if love be blind,
 It best agrees with night.—Come, civil⁴ night,
 Thou sober-suited matron, all in black,
 And learn me how to lose a winning match,
 Played for a pair of stainless maidenhoods ;
 Hood my unmanned blood bating in my cheeks,⁵
 With thy black mantle ; till strange love, grown bold,
 Think true love acted, simple modesty.
 Come, night !—Come, Romeo ! come, thou day in
 night !
 For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night

¹ The sentiment here enforced is different from that found in the first edition, 1597. There the prince concludes his speech with these words :—

“ Pity shall dwell, and govern with us still ;
 Mercy to all but murderers,—pardoning none that kill.”

² Here ends this speech in the original quarto. The rest of the scene has likewise received considerable alterations and additions.

³ i. e. *that the eyes* of prying persons, who run away as soon as observed, may wink, i. e. see imperfectly. Much ingenious criticism has been bestowed in endeavoring to explain this passage. The runaway has been supposed to refer to the *sun*, to *night*, to *Juliet*, to *Romeo*, and to *Fame*. There is most probably some typographical error in the lines.

⁴ *Civil* is grave, solemn.

⁵ These are terms of falconry. An *unmanned* hawk is one that is not brought to endure company. *Bating* is fluttering or beating the wings as striving to fly away.

Whiter than new snow upon a raven's back.—
Come, gentle night ; come, loving, black-browed night,
Give me my Romeo ; and, when he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine,
That all the world will be in love with night,
And pay no worship to the garish sun.—
O, I have bought the mansion of a love,
But not possessed it ; and, though I am sold,
Not yet enjoyed. So tedious is this day,
As is the night before some festival
To an impatient child, that hath new robes,
And may not wear them. O, here comes my nurse,

Enter Nurse, with cords.

And she brings news ; and every tongue, that speaks
But Romeo's name, speaks heavenly eloquence.—
Now, nurse, what news ? What hast thou there ? the
cords

That Romeo bade thee fetch ?

Nurse.

Ay, ay, the cords.

[Throws them down.]

Jul. Ah me ! what news ? why dost thou wring thy
hands ?

Nurse. Ah, well-a-day ! he's dead, he's dead, he's
dead !

We are undone, lady, we are undone !

Alack the day !—he's gone, he's killed, he's dead !

Jul. Can Heaven be so envious ?

Nurse.

Romeo can,

Though Heaven cannot. O Romeo ! Romeo !—

Who ever would have thought it ? Romeo !

Jul. What devil art thou, that dost torment me thus ?
This torture should be roared in dismal hell.

Hath Romeo slain himself ? say thou but *I*,¹

And that bare vowel *I* shall poison more

¹ In Shakspeare's time, the affirmative particle *ay* was usually written *I* ; and here it is necessary to retain the old spelling.

Than the death-darting eye of cockatrice :
I am not I, if there be such an *I*;
Or those eyes shut, that make thee answer, *I*.
If he be slain, say—*I*; or if not, no :
Brief sounds determine of my weal, or woe.

Nurse. I saw the wound, I saw it with mine eyes,—
God save the mark !¹—here on his manly breast.
A piteous corse, a bloody, piteous corse ;
Pale, pale as ashes, all bedaubed in blood,
All in gore blood ; I swooned at the sight.

Jul. O, break, my heart !—poor bankrupt, break at
once !

To prison, eyes ! ne'er look on liberty !
Vile earth, to earth resign ; end motion here ;
And thou, and Romeo, press one heavy bier !

Nurse. O Tybalt, Tybalt, the best friend I had !
O courteous Tybalt ! honest gentleman !
That ever I should live to see thee dead !

Jul. What storm is this, that blows so contrary ?
Is Romeo slaughtered ? and is Tybalt dead ?
My dear-loved cousin, and my dearer lord ?—
Then, dreadful trumpet, sound the general doom !
For who is living, if those two are gone ?

Nurse. Tybalt is gone, and Romeo banished ;
Romeo, that killed him, he is banished.

Jul. O God !—did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's
blood ?

Nurse. It did, it did ; alas the day ! it did.

Jul. O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face !
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave ?
Beautiful tyrant ! fiend angelical !
Dove-feathered raven ! wolvis-ravens lamb !
Despised substance of divinest show !
Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st,
A damned saint, an honorable villain !—
O nature ! what hadst thou to do in hell,
When thou didst bower the spirit of a fiend

¹ See Othello, Act i. Sc. 1.

In mortal paradise of such sweet flesh?
 Was ever book, containing such vile matter,
 So fairly bound? O, that deceit should dwell
 In such a gorgeous palace!

Nurse. There's no trust,
 No faith, no honesty in men; all perjured,
 All forsworn, all naught, all dissemblers.—
 Ah, where's my man? Give me some *aqua vitæ*.—
 These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old.
 Shame come to Romeo!

Jul. Blistered be thy tongue,
 For such a wish! he was not born to shame.
 Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit;
 For 'tis a throne where honor may be crowned
 Sole monarch of the universal earth.
 O, what a beast was I to chide at him!

Nurse. Will you speak well of him that killed your
 cousin?

Jul. Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?
 Ah, poor my lord, what tongue shall smooth¹ thy name,
 When I, thy three-hours wife, have mangled it?—
 But wherefore, villain, didst thou kill my cousin?
 That villain cousin would have killed my husband.
 Back, foolish tears, back to your native spring;
 Your tributary drops belong to woe,
 Which you, mistaking, offer up to joy.
 My husband lives, that Tybalt would have slain;
 And Tybalt's dead, that would have slain my husband.
 All this is comfort. Wherefore weep I, then?
 Some word there was, worsen than Tybalt's death,
 That murdered me; I would forget it fain;
 But, O! it presses to my memory,
 Like damned, guilty deeds to sinners' minds.
Tybalt is dead, and Romeo—banished;
That—banished, that one word—banished,
 Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts.² Tybalt's death

¹ To *smooth* is to flatter, to *speak fair*; it is here metaphorically used for to mitigate or assuage the asperity of censure with which Romeo's name would be now mentioned.

² i. e. is worse than the loss of ten thousand Tybalts.

Was woe enough, if it had ended there ;
 Or,—if sour woe delights in fellowship,
 And needly will be ranked with other griefs,—
 Why followed not, when she said—Tybalt's dead,
 Thy father, or thy mother, nay, or both,
 Which modern¹ lamentation might have moved ?
 But, with a rear-ward following Tybalt's death,
Romeo is banished,—to speak that word,
 Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,
 All slain, all dead.—*Romeo is banished*,—
 There is no end, no limit, measure, bound,
 In that word's death ; no words can that woe sound.—
 Where is my father, and my mother, nurse ?

Nurse. Weeping and wailing over Tybalt's corse.
 Will you go to them ? I will bring you thither.

Jul. Wash they his wounds with tears ? mine shall
 be spent,

When theirs are dry, for Romeo's banishment.
 Take up those cords.—Poor ropes, you are beguiled,
 Both you and I ; for Romeo is exiled.
 He made you for a highway to my bed ;
 But I, a maid, die maiden-widowed.
 Come, cords ; come, nurse ; I'll to my wedding bed ;
 And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead.

Nurse. Hie to your chamber. I'll find Romeo
 To comfort you ;—I wot well where he is.
 Hark ye, your Romeo will be here at night ;
 I'll to him ; he is hid at Laurence' cell.

Jul. O, find him ! give this ring to my true knight,
 And bid him come to take his last farewell. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. Friar Laurence's Cell.

Enter FRIAR LAURENCE *and* ROMEO.

Fri. Romeo, come forth ; come forth, thou fearful
 man ;
 Affliction is enamored of thy parts,
 And thou art wedded to calamity.

¹ *Modern is trite, common.*

Rom. Father, what news? What is the prince's doom?

What sorrow craves acquaintance at my hand,
That I yet know not?

Fri. Too familiar
Is my dear son with such sour company.
I bring thee tidings of the prince's doom.

Rom. What less than doomsday is the prince's doom?

Fri. A gentler judgment vanished from his lips,
Not body's death, but body's banishment.

Rom. Ha! banishment? be merciful, say—death;
For exile hath more terror in his look,
Much more than death: do not say—banishment.

Fri. Hence from Verona art thou banished.
Be patient, for the world is broad and wide.

Rom. There is no world without Verona walls,
But purgatory, torture, hell itself.
Hence-banished is banish'd from the world,
And world's exile is death.—Then banishment
Is death misterm'd; calling death banishment,
Thou cut'st my head off with a golden axe,
And smil'st upon the stroke that murders me.

Fri. O deadly sin! O rude unthankfulness!
Thy fault our law calls death; but the kind prince,
Taking thy part, hath rushed aside the law,
And turned that black word death to banishment.
This is dear mercy,¹ and thou seest it not.

Rom. 'Tis torture, and not mercy. Heaven is here,
Where Juliet lives; and every cat and dog,
And little mouse, every unworthy thing,
Live here in heaven, and may look on her,
But Romeo may not.—More validity,²
More honorable state, more courtship lives
In carrion flies, than Romeo. They may seize
On the white wonder of dear Juliet's hand,

¹ The quarto, 1597, reads "This is mere mercy," i. e. absolute mercy.

² *Validity* is again employed to signify worth, value, as in the first scene of *King Lear*. By *courtship*, is meant that freedom with which a lover is indulged.

And steal immortal blessing from her lips ;
 Who, even in pure and vestal modesty,
 Still blush as thinking their own kisses sin ;
 But Romeo may not ; he is banished.
 Flies may do this, when I from this must fly ;
 They are free men, but I am banished.
 And say'st thou yet, that exile is not death ?
 Hadst thou no poison mixed, no sharp-ground knife,
 No sudden mean of death, though ne'er so mean,
 But—banished—to kill me ; banished ?
 O friar, the damned use that word in hell ;
 Howlings attend it. How hast thou the heart,
 Being a divine, a ghostly confessor,
 A sin-absolver, and my friend professed,
 To mangle me with that word—banishment ?

Fri. Thou fond mad man, hear me but speak a word.

Rom. O, thou wilt speak again of banishment.

Fri. I'll give thee armor to keep off that word ;
 Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy,
 To comfort thee, though thou art banished.

Rom. Yet banished ?—Hang up philosophy !
 Unless philosophy can make a Juliet,
 Displant a town, reverse a prince's doom ;
 It helps not, it prevails not ; talk no more.

Fri. O, then I see that madmen have no ears.

Rom. How should they, when that wise men have
 no eyes ?

Fri. Let me dispute with thee of thy estate.¹

Rom. Thou canst not speak of what thou dost not
 feel.

Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love,
 An hour but married, Tybalt murdered,
 Doting like me, and like me banished,
 Then mightst thou speak, then might'st thou tear thy hair,

¹ The same phrase, and with the same meaning, occurs in *The Winter's Tale* :—

“ ——— can he speak ? hear ?

Know man from man ! *dispute his own estate ?* ”

i. e. his own affairs, or the present state he is in ?

And fall upon the ground, as I do now,
Taking the measure of an unmade grave.

Fri. Arise ; one knocks ; good Romeo, hide thyself.
[*Knocking within.*

Rom. Not I ; unless the breath of heart-sick groans,
Mist-like, infold me from the search of eyes.

[*Knocking.*
Fri. Hark, how they knock !—Who's there ?—
Romeo, arise ?

Thou wilt be taken.—Stay awhile : stand up ;

[*Knocking.*
Run to my study.—By and by ;—God's will !
What wilfulness is this ?—I come, I come.

[*Knocking.*
Who knocks so hard ? whence come you ? what's your
will ?

Nurse. [*Within.*] Let me come in, and you shall
know my errand ;
I come from lady Juliet.

Fri. Welcome, then.

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. O holy friar, O, tell me, holy friar,
Where is my lady's lord, where's Romeo ?

Fri. There, on the ground, with his own tears made
drunk.

Nurse. O, he is even in my mistress' case,
Just in her case !

Fri. O woful sympathy !
Piteous predicament !

Nurse. Even so lies she,
Blubbing and weeping, weeping and blubbing.—
Stand up, stand up ; stand, an you be a man.
For Juliet's sake, for her sake, rise and stand ;
Why should you fall into so deep an O ?

Rom. Nurse !

Nurse. Ah sir ! ah sir !—Well, death's the end of
all.

Rom. Spak'st thou of Juliet ? How is it with her ?

Doth she not think me an old murderer,
 Now I have stained the childhood of our joy
 With blood removed but little from her own?
 Where is she? and how doth she? and what says
 My concealed lady¹ to our cancelled love?

Nurse. O, she says nothing, sir, but weeps and weeps;

And now falls on her bed, and then starts up,
 And Tybalt calls; and then on Romeo cries,
 And then down falls again.

Rom. As if that name,
 Shot from the deadly level of a gun,
 Did murder her; as that name's cursed hand
 Murdered her kinsman.—O, tell me, friar, tell me,
 In what vile part of this anatomy
 Doth my name lodge? tell me, that I may sack
 The hateful mansion. [*Drawing his sword.*]

Fri. Hold thy desperate hand.
 Art thou a man? Thy form cries out, thou art;
 Thy tears are womanish; thy wild acts denote
 The unreasonable fury of a beast.
 Unseemly woman, in a seeming man!
 Or ill-beseeming beast, in seeming both!
 Thou hast amazed me; by my holy order,
 I thought thy disposition better tempered.
 Hast thou slain Tybalt? wilt thou slay thyself,
 And slay thy lady too, that lives in thee,
 By doing damned hate upon thyself?
 Why rail'st thou on thy birth,² the heaven, and earth?
 Since birth, and heaven, and earth, all three do meet
 In thee at once; which thou at once wouldst lose.
 Fie, fie! thou sham'st thy shape, thy love, thy wit;
 Which, like an usurer, abound'st in all,
 And usest none in that true use indeed
 Which should bedeck thy shape, thy love, thy wit.
 Thy noble shape is but a form of wax,

¹ "My lady, whose being so, together with our marriage which made her so, is concealed from the world."

² The lines from *Why rail'st thou on thy birth, &c., to thy own defence*, are not in the first copy; they are formed on a passage in the poem.

Digressing from the valor of a man ;
Thy dear love, sworn, but hollow perjury,
Killing that love which thou hast vowed to cherish ;
Thy wit, that ornament to shape and love,
Misshapen in the conduct of them both,
Like powder in a skillless soldier's flask,¹
Is set on fire by thine own ignorance,
And thou dismembered with thine own defence.²
What, rouse thee, man ! thy Juliet is alive,
For whose dear sake thou wast but lately dead ;
There art thou happy. Tybalt would kill thee,
But thou slew'st Tybalt ; there art thou happy too.
The law, that threatened death, becomes thy friend,
And turns it to exile ; there art thou happy.
A pack of blessings lights upon thy back ;
Happiness courts thee in her best array ;
But, like a misbehaved and sullen wench,
Thou pout'st upon thy fortune and thy love.
Take heed, take heed, for such die miserable.
Go, get thee to thy love, as was decreed,
Ascend her chamber, hence and comfort her ;
But look thou stay not till the watch be set,
For then thou canst not pass to Mantua ;
Where thou shalt live, till we can find a time
To blaze your marriage, reconcile your friends,
Beg pardon of the prince, and call thee back
With twenty hundred thousand times more joy
Than thou went'st forth in lamentation.—
Go before, nurse ; commend me to thy lady ;
And bid her hasten all the house to bed,
Which heavy sorrow makes them apt unto.
Romeo is coming.³

Nurse. O Lord, I could have staid here all the
night,

¹ To understand the force of this allusion, it should be remembered, that the ancient English soldiers, using match-locks, instead of locks with flints, as at present, were obliged to carry a lighted *match* hanging at their belts, very near to the wooden *flask* in which they carried their powder.

² And thou torn to pieces with thine own weapons.

³ Much of this speech has also been added since the first edition.

To hear good counsel. O, what learning is!—

My lord, I'll tell my lady you will come.

Rom. Do so, and bid my sweet prepare to chide.

Nurse. Here, sir, a ring she bade me give you, sir.
Hie you, make haste, for it grows very late.

[*Exit Nurse.*]

Rom. How well my comfort is revived by this!

Fri. Go hence; good night! and here stands all
your state;¹

Either be gone before the watch be set,
Or by the break of day, disguised from hence.
Sojourn in Mantua; I'll find out your man,
And he shall signify from time to time
Every good hap to you, that chances here.
Give me thy hand; 'tis late: farewell; good night.

Rom. But that a joy past joy calls out on me,
It were a grief, so brief to part with thee.
Farewell.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV. *A Room in Capulet's House.*

Enter CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, and PARIS.

Cap. Things have fallen out, sir, so unluckily,
That we have had no time to move our daughter.
Look you, she loved her kinsman Tybalt dearly,
And so did I;—Well, we were born to die.—
'Tis very late; she'll not come down to-night.
I promise you, but for your company,
I would have been abed an hour ago.

Par. These times of woe afford no time to woo.
Madam, good night; commend me to your daughter.

La. Cap. I will, and know her mind early to-morrow;
To-night she's mew'd up to her heaviness.

Cap. Sir Paris, I will make a desperate² tender
Of my child's love. I think she will be ruled

¹ The whole of your fortune depends on this.

² *Desperate* means only *bold, adventurous*.

In all respects by me ; nay more, I doubt it not.
Wife, go you to her ere you go to bed ;
Acquaint her here of my son Paris' love ;
And bid her, mark you me, on Wednesday next—
But, soft ; what day is this ?

Par. Monday, my lord.

Cap. Monday ? ha ! ha ! Well, Wednesday is too soon ;

O' Thursday let it be ;—O' Thursday, tell her,
She shall be married to this noble earl.—
Will you be ready ? Do you like this haste ?
We'll keep no great ado ;—a friend or two.—
For hark you, Tybalt being slain so late,
It may be thought we held him carelessly,
Being our kinsman, if we revel much ;
Therefore we'll have some half a dozen friends,
And there an end. But what say you to Thursday ?

Par. My lord, I would that Thursday were to-morrow.

Cap. Well, get you gone :—O' Thursday be it, then.—
Go you to Juliet ere you go to bed,
Prepare her, wife, against this wedding-day.—
Farewell, my lord.—Light to my chamber, ho !
Afore me.—It is so very late, that we
May call it early, by and by.—Good night.¹ [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. Juliet's Chamber.²

Enter ROMEO and JULIET.

Jul. Wilt thou be gone ? it is not yet near day.
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear ;

¹ The latter part of this scene is a good deal varied from the first quarto.

² The stage direction in the first edition is, "*Enter Romeo and Juliet at a window ;*" in the second quarto, "*Enter Romeo and Juliet aloft.*" They appeared, probably, in the balcony which was erected on the old English stage.

Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree.
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

Rom. It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale; look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east.
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops;
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

Jul. Yon light is not daylight, I know it, I.
It is some meteor that the sun exhales,
To be to thee this night a torch-bearer,
And light thee on thy way to Mantua.
Therefore stay yet, thou need'st not to be gone.¹

Rom. Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death;
I am content, so thou wilt have it so.
I'll say yon gray is not the morning's eye,
'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow;
Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads;
I have more care to stay, than will to go.—
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.—
How is't, my soul? let's talk; it is not day.

Jul. It is, it is; hie hence, be gone, away.
It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
Straining harsh discords, and displeasing sharps.
Some say the lark makes sweet division;²
This doth not so, for she divideth us.

¹ The quarto, 1597, reads:—

"Then stay awhile, thou shalt not go [so] soon."

The succeeding speech, I think (says Mr. Boswell), is better in the same copy:—

"Let me stay here, let me be ta'en, and die;
If thou wilt have it so, I am content.
I'll say yon gray is not the morning's eye,
It is the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow;
I'll say it is the nightingale that beats
The vaulty heaven so far above our heads,
And not the lark, the messenger of morn;
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so—
What says my love? let's talk, 'tis not yet day."

² A division, in music, is a variation in melody upon some given fundamental harmony.

Some say the lark and loathed toad change eyes;¹
O, now I would they had changed voices too!
Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,
Hunting thee hence with hunts-up² to the day.
O, now be gone; more light and light it grows.

Rom. More light and light?—more dark and dark
our woes.

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. Madam!

Jul. Nurse?

Nurse. Your lady mother's coming to your chamber.
The day is broke; be wary, look about.

[*Exit Nurse.*

Jul. Then, window, let day in, and let life out.

Rom. Farewell, farewell! one kiss, and I'll descend.

[*ROMEO descends.*

Jul. Art thou gone so? my love! my lord! my
friend!

I must hear from thee every day i' the hour,

For in a minute there are many days.

O! by this count I shall be much in years,

Ere I again behold my Romeo.

Rom. Farewell! I will omit no opportunity
That may convey my greetings, love, to thee.

Jul. O, think'st thou we shall ever meet again?

Rom. I doubt it not; and all these woes shall serve
For sweet discourses in our time to come.

Jul. O God! I have an ill-divining soul.

Methinks I see thee, now thou art below,

As one dead in the bottom of a tomb.

Either my eyesight fails, or thou look'st pale.

Rom. And trust me, love, in my eye so do you;
Dry sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu! adieu!

[*Exit ROMEO.*

Jul. O fortuné, fortune! all men call thee fickle:

¹ The toad having very fine eyes, and the lark very ugly ones, was the occasion of a common saying, that *the toad and the lark had changed eyes*.

² The *hunt's up* was originally a tune played to wake sportsmen, and call them together. It was a common burden of hunting-ballads.

If thou art fickle, what dost thou with him
That is renowned for faith? Be fickle, fortune;
For then, I hope, thou wilt not keep him long,
But send him back.

La. Cap. [*Within.*] Ho, daughter! are you up?

Jul. Who is't that calls? is it my lady mother?
Is she not down so late, or up so early?
What unaccustomed cause procures¹ her hither?

Enter LADY CAPULET.

La. Cap. Why, how now, Juliet?

Jul. Madam, I am not well.

La. Cap. Evermore weeping for your cousin's death?
What, wilt thou wash him from his grave with tears?
An if thou couldst, thou couldst not make him live;
Therefore, have done. Some grief shows much of love;
But much of grief shows still some want of wit.

Jul. Yet let me weep for such a feeling loss.

La. Cap. So shall you feel the loss, but not the
friend

Which you weep for.

Jul. Feeling so the loss,

I cannot choose but ever weep the friend.

La. Cap. Well, girl, thou weep'st not so much for
his death,

As that the villain lives which slaughtered him.

Jul. What villain, madam?

La. Cap. That same villain, Romeo.

Jul. Villain and he are many miles asunder.

God pardon him! I do with all my heart;
And yet no man, like he, doth grieve my heart.

La. Cap. That is, because the traitor-murderer lives.

Jul. Ay, madam, from the reach of these my hands.
'Would none but I might venge my cousin's death!

La. Cap. We will have vengeance for it, fear thou
not;

Then weep no more. I'll send to one in Mantua,—

¹ *Procures* for brings.

Where that same banished runagate doth live,—
That shall bestow on him so sure a draught,¹
That he shall soon keep Tybalt company ;
And then, I hope, thou wilt be satisfied.

Jul. Indeed, I never shall be satisfied
With Romeo, till I behold him—dead—
Is my poor heart so for a kinsman vexed :—
Madam, if you could find out but a man
To bear a poison, I would temper it,
That Romeo should, upon receipt thereof,
Soon sleep in quiet.—O, how my heart abhors
To hear him named,—and cannot come to him,—
To wreak the love I bore my cousin Tybalt
Upon his body that hath slaughtered him !

La. Cap. Find thou the means, and I'll find such a
man.

But now I'll tell thee joyful tidings, girl.

Jul. And joy comes well in such a needful time.
What are they, I beseech your ladyship ?

La. Cap. Well, well, thou hast a careful father,
child ;

One, who, to put thee from thy heaviness,
Hath sorted out a sudden day of joy,
That thou expect'st not, nor I looked not for.

Jul. Madam, in happy time,² what day is that ?

La. Cap. Marry, my child, early next Thursday
morn,

The gallant, young, and noble gentleman,
The county³ Paris, at Saint Peter's church,
Shall happily make thee there a joyful bride.

Jul. Now, by Saint Peter's church, and Peter too,
He shall not make me there a joyful bride.
I wonder at this haste ; that I must wed
Ere he, that should be husband, comes to woo.

¹ Thus the first quarto. The subsequent quartos and the folio, less intelligibly, read :—

“ Shall give him such an *unaccustomed dram*.”

² *À la bonne heure*. This phrase was interjected when the hearer was not so well pleased as the speaker.

³ *County*, or *countie*, was the usual term for an earl in Shakspeare's time. Paris is, in this play, first styled a *young earle*.

I pray you, tell my lord and father, madam,
I will not marry yet; and when I do, I swear,
It shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate,
Rather than Paris.—These are news indeed!

La. Cap. Here comes your father; tell him so
yourself,
And see how he will take it at your hands.

Enter CAPULET and Nurse.

Cap. When the sun sets, the air doth drizzle dew;¹
But for the sunset of my brother's son,
It rains downright.—

How now, a conduit, girl? what, still in tears?
Evermore showering? In one little body
Thou counterfeit'st a bark, a sea, a wind.
For still thy eyes, which I may call the sea,
Do ebb and flow with tears; the bark thy body is,
Sailing in this salt flood; the winds, thy sighs,
Who,—raging with thy tears, and they with them,—
Without a sudden calm, will overset
Thy tempest-tossed body.—How now, wife?
Have you delivered to her our decree?

La. Cap. Ay, sir; but she will none, she gives you
thanks.

I would the fool were married to her grave!

Cap. Soft, take me with you, take me with you, wife.
How! will she none? doth she not give us thanks?
Is she not proud? doth she not count her blessed,
Unworthy as she is, that we have wrought
So worthy a gentleman to be her bridegroom?

Jul. Not proud, you have; but thankful, that you
have;

Proud can I never be of what I hate;
But thankful even for hate, that is meant love.

Cap. How now! how now, chop-logic!² What is
this?

¹ Thus the quarto 1597. The quarto 1599, and the folio, read, "the earth doth drizzle dew," which is philosophically true; and so, perhaps, the Poet wrote.

² Capulet, as Steevens observes, uses this as a nickname. The hyphen

Proud,—and, I thank you,—and, I thank you not ;—
 And yet not proud.—Mistress minion, you,
 Thank me no thankings, nor proud me no pouds,
 But settle your fine joints 'gainst Thursday next,
 To go with Paris to Saint Peter's church,
 Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither.
 Out, you green-sickness carrion ! out, you baggage !
 You tallow-face !

La. Cap. Fie, fie ! what, are you mad ?

Jul. Good father, I beseech you on my knees,
 Hear me with patience but to speak a word.

Cap. Hang thee, young baggage ! disobedient
 wretch !

I tell thee what,—get thee to church o' Thursday,
 Or never after look me in the face.
 Speak not, reply not, do not answer me ;
 My fingers itch.—Wife, we scarce thought us blessed,
 That God had sent us but this only child ;
 But now I see this one is one too much,
 And that we have a curse in having her.
 Out on her, hilding !¹

Nurse. God in heaven bless her !—
 You are to blame, my lord, to rate her so.

Cap. And why, my lady wisdom ? Hold your
 tongue,
 Good prudence ; smatter with your gossips, go.

Nurse. I speak no treason.

Cap. O, God ye good den !

Nurse. May not one speak ?

Cap. Peace, you mumbling fool !
 Utter your gravity o'er a gossip's bowl,
 For here we need it not.

La. Cap. You are too hot.

Cap. God's bread ! it makes me mad. Day, night,
 late, early,

is wanting in the old copy. "Choplogyk is he that whan his mayster rebuketh his servaunt for his defawtes, he will give him xx wordes for one, or elles he will bydde the devylles paternoster in scylence."—*The xxiij Orders of Knaves*, blk. l.

¹ Base woman.

At home, abroad, alone, in company,
 Waking, or sleeping, still my care hath been
 To have her matched; and having now provided
 A gentleman of princely parentage,
 Of fair demesnes, youthful, and nobly trained,
 Stuffed, (as they say,) with honorable parts,
 Proportioned as one's heart could wish a man,—
 And then to have a wretched, puling fool,
 A whining mammet, in her fortune's tender,
 To answer—*I'll not wed,—I cannot love,
 I am too young—I pray you, pardon me ;—*
 But, an you will not wed, I'll pardon you :
 Graze where you will, you shall not house with me ;
 Look to't, think on't, I do not use to jest.
 Thursday is near ; lay hand on heart, advise ;
 An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend ;
 An you be not, hang, beg, starve, die i' the streets,
 For, by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee,
 Nor what is mine, shall never do thee good.
 Trust to't ; bethink you, I'll not be forsworn. [Exit.

Jul. Is there no pity sitting in the clouds,
 That sees into the bottom of my grief ?

O, sweet my mother, cast me not away !
 Delay this marriage for a month, a week ;
 Or, if you do not, make my bridal bed
 In that dim monument where Tybalt lies.

La. Cap. Talk not to me, for I'll not speak a word ;
 Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee. [Exit.

Jul. O God !—O nurse ! how shall this be pre-
 vented ?

My husband is on earth, my faith in heaven ;
 How shall that faith return again to earth,
 Unless that husband send it me from heaven
 By leaving earth ?—Comfort me, counsel me.—
 Alack, alack, that heaven should practise stratagems
 Upon so soft a subject as myself !—
 What say'st thou ? hast thou not a word of joy ?
 Some comfort, nurse.

Nurse. 'Faith, here 'tis. Romeo
 Is banished ; and all the world to nothing,

That he dares ne'er come back to challenge you ;
Or, if he do, it needs must be by stealth.
Then, since the case so stands as now it doth,
I think it best you married with the county.
O, he's a lovely gentleman !
Romeo's a dishclout to him ; an eagle, madam,
Hath not so green,¹ so quick, so fair an eye,
As Paris hath. Beshrew my very heart,
I think you are happy in this second match,
For it excels your first ; or if it did not,
Your first is dead ; or 'twere as good he were,
As living here, and you no use of him.

Jul. Speakest thou from thy heart ?

Nurse. From my soul too ;
Or else beshrew them both.

Jul. Amen !

Nurse. To what ?

Jul. Well, thou hast comforted me marvellous much.
Go in ; and tell my lady I am gone,
Having displeased my father, to Laurence' cell,
To make confession, and to be absolved.

Nurse. Marry, I will ; and this is wisely done.

[*Exit.*

Jul. Ancient damnation ! O most wicked fiend !
Is it more sin—to wish me thus forsworn,
Or to dispraise my lord with that same tongue
Which she hath praised him with above compare
So many thousand times ?—Go, counsellor ;
Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain.—
I'll to the friar, to know his remedy ;
If all else fail, myself have power to die. [*Exit.*

¹ In *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, by Fletcher and Shakspeare, we find :—

“ ——— oh vouchsafe
With that thy rare green eye,” &c.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. Friar Laurence's Cell.

Enter FRIAR LAURENCE *and* PARIS.

Fri. On Thursday, sir? The time is very short.

Par. My father Capulet will have it so;
And I am nothing slow, to slack his haste.¹

Fri. You say you do not know the lady's mind:
Uneven is the course; I like it not.

Par. Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt's death,
And therefore have I little talked of love;
For Venus smiles not in a house of tears.
Now, sir, her father counts it dangerous,
That she doth give her sorrow so much sway;
And, in his wisdom, hastens our marriage,
To stop the inundation of her tears;
Which, too much minded by herself alone,
May be put from her by society.
Now do you know the reason of this haste.

Fri. I would I knew not why it should be slowed.²

[*Aside.*
Look, sir, here comes the lady towards my cell.

Enter JULIET.

Par. Happily met, my lady, and my wife!

Jul. That may be, sir, when I may be a wife.

Par. That may-be, must be, love, on Thursday
next.

Jul. What must be, shall be.

Fri. That's a certain text.

Par. Come you to make confession to this father?

¹ The meaning of Paris is, *there is nothing of slowness in me, to induce me to slacken or abate his haste*; but the words the Poet has given him import the reverse. The first edition reads,

"And I am nothing *slack* to slow his haste."

² To *slow* and to *foreslow* were anciently in common use as verbs.

Jul. To answer that, were to confess to you.

Par. Do not deny to him that you love me.

Jul. I will confess to you that I love him.

Par. So will you, I am sure, that you love me.

Jul. If I do so, it will be of more price,
Being spoke behind your back, than to your face.

Par. Poor soul, thy face is much abused with tears.

Jul. The tears have got small victory by that ;
For it was bad enough before their spite.

Par. Thou wrong'st it, more than tears, with that
report.

Jul. That is no slander, sir, which is a truth ;
And what I spake, I spake it to my face. .

Par. Thy face is mine, and thou hast slandered it.

Jul. It may be so, for it is not mine own.—
Are you at leisure, holy father, now ;
Or shall I come to you at evening-mass ?¹

Fri. My leisure serves me, pensive daughter, now.
My lord, we must entreat the time alone.

Par. God shield, I should disturb devotion.—
Juliet, on Thursday early will I rouse you ;
Till then, adieu ! and keep this holy kiss.

[*Exit PARIS.*

Jul. O, shut the door ! and when thou hast done so,
Come weep with me ; past hope, past cure, past help !

Fri. Ah, Juliet, I already know thy grief ;
It strains me past the compass of my wits.
I hear thou must, and nothing must proroque it,
On Thursday next be married to this county.

Jul. Tell me not, friar, that thou hear'st of this,
Unless thou tell me how I may prevent it.
If, in thy wisdom, thou canst give no help,
Do thou but call my resolution wise,
And with this knife I'll help it presently.
God joined my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands ;
And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo sealed,
Shall be the label to another deed,²

¹ Juliet means *vespers* ; there is no such thing as *evening-mass*.

² The seals of deeds formerly were appended on distinct slips or labels affixed to the deed.

Or my true heart with treacherous revolt
 Turn to another, this shall slay them both.
 Therefore, out of thy long-experienced time,
 Give me some present counsel; or, behold
 'Twixt my extremes and me this bloody knife
 Shall play the umpire;¹ arbitrating that
 Which the commission² of thy years and art
 Could to no issue of true honor bring.
 Be not so long to speak; I long to die,
 If what thou speak'st speak not of remedy.

Fri. Hold, daughter; I do spy a kind of hope,
 Which craves as desperate an execution,
 As that is desperate which we would prevent.
 If, rather than to marry county Paris,
 Thou hadst the strength of will to slay thyself;
 Then is it likely thou wilt undertake
 A thing like death to chide away this shame,
 That cop'st with death himself to scape from it;
 And, if thou dar'st, I'll give thee remedy.

Jul. O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,
 From off the battlements of yonder tower;
 Or walk in thievish ways; or bid me lurk
 Where serpents are; chain me with roaring bears;
 Or hide me nightly³ in a charnel house,
 O'er covered quite with dead men's rattling bones,
 With reeky shanks, and yellow chapless-skulls;
 Or bid me go into a new-made grave,
 And hide me with a dead man in his shroud;
 Things that, to hear them told, have made me tremble,
 And I will do it without fear or doubt,
 To live an unstained wife to my sweet love.⁴

¹ i. e. shall decide the struggle between me and my distress.

² *Commission* may be here used for *authority*.

³ The quarto 1597 reads:—

“Or chain me to some steepy mountain's top,
 Where roaring bears and savage lions roam.”

In the text, the quarto of 1599 is followed, except that it has “or *hide* me nightly.”

⁴ Thus the quarto 1599 and the folio: the quarto 1597 reads:—

“To keep myself a faithful unstained wife
 To my dear lord, my dearest Romeo.”—*Boswell*.

Fri. Hold, then ; go home, be merry, give consent
 To marry Paris. Wednesday is to-morrow ;
 To-morrow night look that thou lie alone ;
 Let not thy nurse lie with thee in thy chamber.
 Take thou this phial, being then in bed,
 And this distilled liquor drink thou off ;
 When, presently, through all thy veins shall run
 A cold and drowsy humor, [which shall seize
 Each vital spirit ;]¹ for no pulse shall keep
 His natural progress, but surcease [to beat :]¹
 No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou liv'st ;
 The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade
 To paly ashes ; thy eyes' windows fall,
 Like death, when he shuts up the day of life ;
 Each part deprived of supple government,
 Shall, stiff, and stark, and cold, appear like death :
 And in this borrowed likeness of shrunk death
 Thou shalt remain full two-and-forty hours,²
 And then awake as from a pleasant sleep.
 Now when the bridegroom in the morning comes
 To rouse thee from thy bed, there art thou dead :
 Then (as the manner of our country is)
 In thy best robes uncovered on the bier,³
 Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault,
 Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.
 In the mean time, against thou shalt awake,
 Shall Romeo by my letters know our drift ;
 And hither shall he come ; and he and I
 Will watch thy waking, and that very night
 Shall Romeo bear thee hence to Mantua.
 And this shall free thee from this present shame ;

¹ Not in the folio of 1623.

² Instead of the remainder of this scene, the quarto 1597 has only these four lines :—

“ And when thou art laid in thy kindred's vault,
 I'll send in haste to Mantua to thy lord ;
 And he shall come and take thee from thy grave.

Jul. Friar, I go ; be sure thou send for my dear Romeo.”

³ The Italian custom here alluded to, of carrying the dead body to the grave richly dressed, and with the face *uncovered* (which is not mentioned by Painter), Shakspeare found particularly described in the *Tragicall History of Romeus and Juliet*.

If no unconstant toy,¹ nor womanish fear,
Abate thy valor in the acting it.

Jul. Give me, give me! O, tell me not of fear.

Fri. Hold; get you gone; be strong and prosperous
In this resolve. I'll send a friar with speed
To Mantua, with my letters to thy lord.

Jul. Love, give me strength! and strength shall
help afford.

Farewell, dear father!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A Room in Capulet's House.*

Enter CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, Nurse, *and* Servants.

Cap. So many guests invite as here are writ.—

[*Exit* Servant.

Sirrah, go hire me twenty cunning cooks.

2 Serv. You shall have none ill, sir; for I'll try if
they can lick their fingers.

Cap. How canst thou try them so?

2 Serv. Marry, sir, 'tis an ill cook that cannot lick
his own fingers; therefore he that cannot lick his
fingers, goes not with me.

Cap. Go, begone.—

[*Exit* Servant.

We shall be much unfurnished for this time.—

What, is my daughter gone to friar Laurence?

Nurse. Ay, forsooth.

Cap. Well, he may chance to do some good on her;
A peevish, self-willed harlotry it is.

Enter JULIET.

Nurse. See, where she comes from shrift² with
merry look.

Cap. How now, my headstrong? where have you
been gadding?

¹ If no *fickle freak*, no *light caprice*, no *change of fancy*, hinder the performance.

² i. e. confession.

Jul. Where I have learned me to repent the sin
Of disobedient opposition
To you, and your behests ; and am enjoined
By holy Laurence to fall prostrate here,
And beg your pardon.—Pardon, I beseech you !
Henceforward I am ever ruled by you.

Cap. Send for the county ; go tell him of this ;
I'll have this knot knit up to-morrow morning.

Jul. I met the youthful lord at Laurence' cell ;
And gave him what becomed ¹ love I might,
Not stepping o'er the bounds of modesty.

Cap. Why, I am glad on't ; this is well,—stand up ;
This is as't should be.—Let me see the county ;
Ay, marry, go, I say, and fetch him hither.—
Now, afore God, this reverend, holy friar,
All our whole city is much bound to him.²

Jul. Nurse, will you go with me into my closet,
To help me sort such needful ornaments
As you think fit to furnish me to-morrow ?

La. Cap. No, not till Thursday ; there is time
enough.

Cap. Go, nurse, go with her ;—we'll to church to-
morrow. *[Exeunt JULIET and Nurse.]*

La. Cap. We shall be short in our provision ;
'Tis now near night.

Cap. Tush ! I will stir about,
And all things shall be well, I warrant thee, wife.
Go thou to Juliet, help to deck up her ;
I'll not to bed to-night ;—let me alone ;
I'll play the housewife for this once.—What, ho !
They are all forth. Well, I will walk myself
To county Paris, to prepare him up
Against to-morrow ; my heart is wondrous light,
Since this same wayward girl is so reclaimed.

[Exeunt.]

¹ *Becomed* for *becoming* ; one participle for another ; a frequent practice with Shakspeare.

² Thus the folio and the quartos 1599 and 1609. The oldest quarto reads, perhaps more grammatically :—

“ All our whole city is much bound unto.”

SCENE III. Juliet's Chamber.

Enter JULIET and Nurse.

Jul. Ay, those attires are best.—But, gentle nurse,
I pray thee, leave me to myself to-night;
For I have need of many orisons
To move the Heavens to smile upon my state,
Which, well thou know'st, is cross and full of sin.

Enter LADY CAPULET.

La. Cap. What, are you busy? Do you need my help?

Jul. No, madam; we have culled such necessities
As are behoveful for our state to-morrow;
So please you, let me now be left alone,
And let the nurse this night sit up with you;
For, I am sure, you have your hands full all,
In this so sudden business.

La. Cap. Good night!
Get thee to bed, and rest; for thou hast need.

[Exeunt LADY CAPULET and Nurse.]

Jul. Farewell!¹—God knows when we shall meet again.

I have a faint, cold fear thrills through my veins,
That almost freezes up the heat of life;
I'll call them back again to comfort me.—
Nurse!—What should she do here?
My dismal scene I needs must act alone.—
Come, phial.—
What if this mixture do not work at all?
Must I of force be married to the county?—
No, no;—this shall forbid it;—lie thou there.—

[Laying down a dagger.²

¹ This speech received considerable additions after the first copy was published.

² This stage direction has been supplied by the modern editions. The quarto of 1597 reads:—"Knife, lie thou there."

"Daggers, or, as they were more commonly called, knives (says Mr.

What if it be a poison, which the friar
Subtly hath ministered to have me dead ;
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonored,
Because he married me before to Romeo ?
I fear it is ; and yet, methinks, it should not,
For he hath still been tried a holy man ;
I will not entertain so bad a thought.—
How if, when I am laid into the tomb,
I wake before the time that Romeo
Come to redeem me ? There's a fearful point !
Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,
To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,
And there 'die strangled ere my Romeo comes ?
Or, if I live, is it not very like,
The horrible conceit of death and night,
Together with the terror of the place,—
As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,
Where, for these many hundred years, the bones
Of all my buried ancestors are packed ;
Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,
Lies festering¹ in his shroud ; where, as they say,
At some hours in the night spirits resort ;—
Alack, alack ! is it not like, that I,
So early waking,—what with loathsome smells,
And shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth,
That living mortals, hearing them, run mad ;²—
O ! if I wake, shall I not be distraught,
Environed with all these hideous fears ?
And madly play with my forefathers' joints ?
And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud ?
And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone,
As with a club, dash out my desperate brains ?
O, look ! methinks I see my cousin's ghost
Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body

Gifford), were worn at all times by every woman in England ; whether they were so worn in Italy, Shakspeare, I believe, never inquired, and I cannot tell."—*Works of Ben Jonson*, vol. v. p. 221.

¹ To *fester* is to corrupt.

² The *mandrake* (says Thomas Newton in his *Herbal*) has been idly represented as "a creature having life."

Upon a rapier's point.—Stay, Tybalt, stay!—
Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee.

[*She throws herself on the bed.*]

SCENE IV. Capulet's Hall.

Enter LADY CAPULET and Nurse.

La. Cap. Hold, take these keys, and fetch more
spices, nurse.

Nurse. They call for dates and quinces in the
pastry.¹ [*Exit* Nurse.]

Enter CAPULET.

Cap. Come, stir, stir, stir! the second cock hath
crowed,
The curfew bell hath rung, 'tis three o'clock.—
Look to the baked meats, good Angelica :
Spare not for cost.

La. Cap. Go, go, you cot-quean,² go,
Get you to bed ; 'faith, you'll be sick to-morrow
For this night's watching.³

Cap. No, not a whit ; what ! I have watched ere
now
All night for lesser cause, and ne'er been sick.

La. Cap. Ay, you have been a mouse-hunt⁴ in your
time ;
But I will watch you from such watching now.

[*Exit* LADY CAPULET.]

Cap. A jealous-hood, a jealous-hood !—Now, fellow,
What's there ?

¹ The room where the pastry was made.

² A man that troubles himself with women's affairs—probably cook-quean.

³ This speech, which in the old copies is attributed to the nurse, should surely be given to lady Capulet.

⁴ The animal called the *mouse-hunt* is the weasel. The intrigues of this animal, like those of the cat kind, are usually carried on in the night.

Enter Servants, with spits, logs, and baskets.

Serv. Things for the cook, sir; but I know not what.

Cap. Make haste, make haste. [*Exit* 1 *Serv.*]

Sirrah, fetch drier logs;

Call Peter, he will show thee where they are.

2 *Serv.* I have a head, sir, that will find out logs,
And never trouble Peter for the matter. [*Exit.*]

Cap. 'Mass, and well said; a merry whoreson! ha,
Thou shalt be loggerhead.—Good faith, 'tis day;
The county will be here with music straight.

[*Music within.*]

For so he said he would. I hear him near.—

Nurse!—Wife!—what, ho;—what, nurse, I say!

Enter Nurse.

Go, waken Juliet, go, and trim her up;

I'll go and chat with Paris.—Hie, make haste,

Make haste! the bridegroom he is come already.

Make haste, I say! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V. Juliet's Chamber; JULIET on the bed.

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. Mistress!—what, mistress!—Juliet!—fast, I
warrant her, she.—

Why, lamb! why, lady;—fie, you slug-a-bed!—

Why, love, I say!—madam! sweet-heart!—why,
bride!

What, not a word?—You take your pennyworths now;

Sleep for a week; for the next night, I warrant,

The county Paris hath set up his rest,¹

¹ Nashe, in his *Terrors of the Night*, quibbles in the same manner on this expression:—"You that are married and have wives of your owne, and yet hold too nere friendship with your neighbors, *set up your rests*, that the night will be an ill neighbor to *your rest*, and that you shall have as little peace of minde as the rest."

That you shall rest but little.—God forgive me,
 (Marry and amen!) how sound is she asleep!
 I needs must wake her.—Madam, madam, madam!
 Ay, let the county take you in your bed;
 He'll fright you up, in faith.—Will it not be?
 What, dressed! and in your clothes! and down again!
 I must needs wake you. Lady! lady! lady!
 Alas! alas!—Help! help! my lady's dead!—
 O, well-a-day, that ever I was born!—
 Some aqua-vitæ, ho!—my lord! my lady!

Enter LADY CAPULET.

La. Cap. What noise is here?

Nurse. O lamentable day!

La. Cap. What is the matter?

Nurse. Look, look! O heavy day!

La. Cap. O me, O me!—my child, my only life,
 Revive, look up, or I will die with thee!—
 Help, help!—call help.

Enter CAPULET.

Cap. For shame, bring Juliet forth; her lord is come.

Nurse. She's dead, deceased, she's dead; alack the day!

La. Cap. Alack the day! she's dead, she's dead,
 she's dead.

Cap. Ha! let me see her.—Out, alas! she's cold;
 Her blood is settled; and her joints are stiff;
 Life and these lips have long been separated.
 Death lies on her, like an untimely frost
 Upon the sweetest flower of all the field!
 Accursed time! unfortunate old man.¹

Nurse. O lamentable day!

La. Cap. O woful time!

Cap. Death, that hath ta'en her hence to make
 me wail,
 Ties up my tongue, and will not let me speak.

¹ This line is taken from the first quarto, 1597.

Enter FRIAR LAURENCE and PARIS, with Musicians.

Fri. Come, is the bride ready to go to church?

Cap. Ready to go, but never to return.
O son, the night before thy wedding-day
Hath death lain with thy bride.—See, there she lies,
Flower as she was, deflowered by him.
Death is my son-in-law, death is my heir;
My daughter he hath wedded! I will die,
And leave him all; life leaving, all is death's.

Par. Have I thought long to see this morning's face,¹
And doth it give me such a sight as this?

La. Cap. Accursed, unhappy, wretched, hateful
day!

Most miserable hour, that e'er time saw
In lasting labor of his pilgrimage!
But one, poor one, one poor and loving child,
But one thing to rejoice and solace in,
And cruel death hath caught it from my sight.

Nurse. O woe! O woful, woful, woful day!
Most lamentable day! most woful day,
That ever, ever I did yet behold!
O day! O day! O day! O hateful day!
Never was seen so black a day as this.
O woful day, O woful day!

Par. Beguiled, divorced, wronged, spited, slain!
Most détestable death, by thee beguiled,
By cruel, cruel thee quite overthrown!—
O love! O life!—not life, but love in death!

Cap. Despised, distressed, hated, martyred, killed!
Uncomfortable time! why cam'st thou now
To murder, murder our solemnity?—

¹ The quarto of 1597 continues the speech of Paris thus:—

“And doth it now present such prodigies?

Accurst, unhappy, miserable man,
Forlorn, forsaken, destitute I am,
Born to the world to be a slave in it:
Distrest, remediless, unfortunate.

Oh, heavens! Oh, nature! wherefore did you make me
To live so vile, so wretched as I shall?”

In the text, the edition of 1599 is here followed. The nurse's exclamatory speech is not in the first quarto.

O child ! O child !—my soul, and not my child !
 Dead art thou, dead !—alack ! my child is dead ;
 And, with my child, my joys are buried !

Fri. Peace, ho, for shame ! confusion's cure lives not
 In these confusions. Heaven and yourself
 Had part in this fair maid ; now Heaven hath all,
 And all the better is it for the maid.
 Your part in her you could not keep from death ;
 But Heaven keeps his part in eternal life.
 The most you sought was—her promotion ;
 For 'twas your heaven, she should be advanced ;
 And weep ye now, seeing she is advanced,
 Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself ?
 O, in this love, you love your child so ill,
 That you run mad, seeing that she is well.
 She's not well married, that lives married long ;
 But she's best married, that dies married young.
 Dry up your tears, and stick your rosemary
 On this fair corse ; and, as the custom is,
 In all her best array bear her to church.
 For though fond nature bids us all lament,
 Yet nature's tears are reason's merriment.

Cap. All things, that we ordained festival,¹
 Turn from their office to black funeral ;
 Our instruments, to melancholy bells ;
 Our wedding cheer, to a sad burial feast ;
 Our solemn hymns to sullen dirges change ;
 Our bridal flowers serve for a buried corse,
 And all things change them to the contrary.

Fri. Sir, go you in,—and, madam, go with him ;
 And go, sir Paris ;—every one prepare
 To follow this fair corse unto her grave.
 The Heavens do lower upon you, for some ill ;
 Move them no more, by crossing their high will.

[*Exeunt* CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, PARIS,
 and Friar.

¹ Instead of this and the following speeches, the first quarto has only a couplet:—

“Let it be so ; come, woful sorrow-mates,
 Let us together taste this bitter fate.”

The enlarged text is formed upon the poem.

1 *Mus.* 'Faith, we may put up our pipes, and be gone.

Nurse. Honest, good fellows, ah, put up ; put up ; For, well you know, this is a pitiful case.

[*Exit Nurse.*

1 *Mus.* Ay, by my troth, the case may be amended.

Enter PETER.

Pet. Musicians, O musicians, *Heart's ease, heart's ease* ; O, an you will have me live, play—*heart's ease*.

1 *Mus.* Why *heart's ease* ?

Pet. O musicians, because my heart itself plays—*My heart is full of woe.*¹ O, play me some merry dump,² to comfort me.

2 *Mus.* Not a dump we ; 'tis no time to play now.

Pet. You will not then ?

Mus. No.

Pet. I will then give it you soundly.

1 *Mus.* What will you give us ?

Pet. No money, on my faith ; but the gleek ;³ I will give you the minstrel.

1 *Mus.* Then will I give you the serving-creature.

Pet. Then will I lay the serving-creature's dagger on your pate. I will carry no crotchets ; I'll *re* you, I'll *fa* you. Do you note me ?

1 *Mus.* An you *re* us, and *fa* us, you note us.

2 *Mus.* 'Pray you, put up your dagger, and put out your wit.

Pet. Then have at you with my wit ; I will dry-beat

¹ This is the burden of the first stanza of A Pleasant New Ballad of Two Lovers :—

“ Hey hoe ! my heart is full of woe.”

² A *dump* was formerly the received term for a grave or melancholy strain in music, vocal or instrumental. It also signified a kind of poetical elegy. A *merry dump* is no doubt a purposed absurdity put into the mouth of master Peter.

³ A pun is here intended. A *gleekman*, or *gligman*, is a *minstrel*. To give the *gleek*, meant, also, to pass a jest upon a person, to make him appear ridiculous ; a *gleek* being a *jest* or *scoff*.

you with an iron wit, and put up my iron dagger.—
Answer me like men :

*When griping grief the heart doth wound,
And doleful dumps the mind oppress,
Then music, with her silver sound,*¹—

Why, *silver sound* ? why, *music with her silver sound* ?
What say you, Simon Catling ?²

1 *Mus.* Marry, sir, because silver hath a sweet sound.

Pet. Pratest ! What say you, Hugh Rebeck ?

2 *Mus.* I say—*silver sound*, because musicians sound for silver.

Pet. Pratest too !—What say you, James Soundpost ?

3 *Mus.* 'Faith, I know not what to say.

Pet. O, I cry you mercy ! you are the singer ; I will say for you. It is—*music with her silver sound*, because musicians have seldom gold for sounding :—

*Then music, with her silver sound,
With speedy help doth lend redress.*

[*Exit, singing.*

1 *Mus.* What a pestilent knave is this same !

2 *Mus.* Hang him, Jack ! Come, we'll in here ;
tarry for the mourners, and stay dinner. [*Exeunt.*

¹ This is part of a song by Richard Edwards, to be found in the *Paradice of Dainty Devices*, fol. 31, b. Another copy of this song is to be found in *Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*.

² This worthy takes his name from a small lutestring made of catgut ; his companion, the fiddler, from an instrument of the same name, mentioned by many of our old writers, and recorded by Milton as an instrument of mirth.

ACT V.

SCENE I. Mantua. *A Street.**Enter ROMEO..*

Rom. If I may trust the flattering eye of sleep,¹ .
My dreams presage some joyful news at hand.
My bosom's lord sits lightly in his throne ;
And, all this day, an unaccustomed spirit
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.
I dreamed my lady came and found me dead,
(Strange dream ! that gives a dead man leave to think,)
And breathed such life with kisses in my lips,
That I revived, and was an emperor.
Ah me ! how sweet is love itself possessed,
When but love's shadows are so rich in joy !

Enter BALTHASAR.

News from Verona !—How now, Balthasar ?
Dost thou not bring me letters from the friar ?
How doth my lady ? Is my father well ?
How doth my Juliet ? That I ask again ;
For nothing can be ill, if she be well.

Bal. Then she is well, and nothing can be ill.
Her body sleeps in Capels' monument,
And her immortal part with angels lives ;
I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault,
And presently took post to tell it you ;
O, pardon me for bringing these ill news,
Since you did leave it for my office, sir.

Rom. Is it even so ? Then I defy you, stars !—

¹ Thus the first quarto. The folio reads :—

“ If I may trust the flattering *truth* of sleep.”

The sense appears to be, If I may repose any confidence in the flattering visions of the night. Otway reads :—

“ If I may trust the flattery of sleep.”

Thou know'st my lodging ; get me ink and paper,
And hire post-horses ; I will hence to-night.

Bal. Pardon me, sir, I will not leave you thus.
Your looks are pale and wild, and do import
Some misadventure.

Rom. Tush, thou art deceived ;
Leave me, and do the thing I bid thee do.
Hast thou no letters to me from the friar ?

Bal. No, my good lord.

Rom. No matter ; get thee gone,
And hire those horses ; I'll be with thee straight.

[*Exit* BALTHASAR.]

Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee to-night.
Let's see for means.—O mischief ! thou art swift
To enter in the thoughts of desperate men !
I do remember an apothecary,—
And hereabouts he dwells,—whom late I noted
In tattered weeds, with overwhelming brows,
Culling of simples ; meagre were his looks,
Sharp misery had worn him to the bones ;
And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,
An alligator stuffed, and other skins
Of ill-shaped fishes ; and about his shelves
A beggarly account of empty boxes,
Green, earthen pots, bladders, and musty seeds,
Remnants of packthread, and old cakes of roses,
Were thinly scattered to make up a show.
Noting this penury, to myself I said—
And if a man did need a poison now,
Whose sale is present death in Mantua,
Here lives a caitiff wretch would sell it him.
O, this same thought did but forerun my need ;
And this same needy man must sell it me.
As I remember, this should be the house ;
Being holiday, the beggar's shop is shut.—
What, ho ! apothecary.

Enter Apothecary.

Ap. Who calls so loud ?

Rom. Come hither, man.—I see that thou art poor ;

Hold, there is forty ducats; let me have
 A dram of poison; such soon-speeding gear
 As will disperse itself through all the veins,
 That the life-weary taker may fall dead;
 And that the trunk may be discharged of breath
 As violently, as hasty powder fired
 Doth hurry from the fatal cannon's womb.

Ap. Such mortal drugs I have; but Mantua's law
 Is death to any he that utters them.

Rom. Art thou so bare, and full of wretchedness,
 And fear'st to die? Famine is in thy cheeks;
 Need and oppression stareth in thy eyes;¹
 Upon thy back hangs ragged misery;
 The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law.
 The world affords no law to make thee rich;
 Then be not poor, but break it, and take this.

Ap. My poverty, but not my will, consents.

Rom. I pay thy poverty, and not thy will.

Ap. Put this in any liquid thing you will,
 And drink it off; and, if you had the strength
 Of twenty men, it would despatch you straight.

Rom. There is thy gold, worse poison to men's souls,
 Doing more murders in this loathsome world,
 Than these poor compounds that thou mayst not sell.
 I sell thee poison, thou hast sold me none.
 Farewell; buy food, and get thyself in flesh.
 Come, cordial, and not poison; go with me
 To Juliet's grave, for there must I use thee.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. Friar Laurence's Cell.

Enter FRIAR JOHN.

John. Holy Franciscan friar! brother, ho!

¹ The quarto of 1597 reads:—

“Upon thy back hangs ragged miserie,
 And starved famine dwelleth in thy cheeks.”

The quartos of 1599 and 1609:—

“Need and oppression *starveth* in thy eyes.”

Enter FRIAR LAURENCE.

Lau. This same should be the voice of friar John.—
Welcome from Mantua; what says Romeo?

Or, if his mind be writ, give me his letter.

John. Going to find a barefoot brother out,
One of our order to associate me,¹
Here in this city visiting the sick,
And finding him, the searchers of the town,
Suspecting that we both were in a house
Where the infectious pestilence did reign,
Sealed up the doors, and would not let us forth;
So that my speed to Mantua there was stayed.

Lau. Who bare my letter, then, to Romeo?

John. I could not send it,—here it is again,—
Nor get a messenger to bring it thee,
So fearful were they of infection.

Lau. Unhappy fortune! by my brotherhood,
The letter was not nice,² but full of charge,
Of dear import; and the neglecting it
May do much danger. Friar John, go hence;
Get me an iron crow, and bring it straight
Unto my cell.

John. Brother, I'll go and bring it thee. [*Exit.*]

Lau. Now must I to the monument alone;
Within this three hours will fair Juliet wake.³
She will beshrew me much, that Romeo
Hath had no notice of these accidents;
But I will write again to Mantua,
And keep her at my cell till Romeo come;
Poor living corse, closed in a dead man's tomb! [*Exit.*]

¹ Each friar had always a companion assigned him by the superior, when he asked leave to go out.

² i. e. was not *wantonly* written on a *trivial* or *idle* matter.

³ Instead of this line, and the concluding part of the speech, the first quarto reads only:—

“Lest that the lady should before I come
Be wak'd from sleepe, I will hys
To free her from that tomb of miserie.”

SCENE III. *A Church-yard; in it a Monument
belonging to the Capulets.*

Enter PARIS, and his Page, bearing flowers and a torch.

Par. Give me my torch, boy. Hence, and stand aloof;—

Yet put it out, for I would not be seen.
Under yon yew-trees lay thee all along,
Holding thine ear close to the hollow ground;
So shall no foot upon the church-yard tread,
(Being loose, unfirm, with digging up of graves,)
But thou shalt hear it; whistle then to me,
As signal that thou hear'st something approach.
Give me those flowers. Do as I bid thee, go.

Page. I am almost afraid to stand alone
Here in the church-yard; yet I will adventure. [*Retires.*

Par. Sweet flower, with flowers I strew thy bridal bed.

Sweet tomb, that in thy circuit dost contain
The perfect model of eternity;
Fair Juliet, that with angels dost remain,¹
Accept this latest favor at my hands;
That living honored thee, and, being dead,
With funeral praises do adorn thy tomb!

[*The boy whistles.*

The boy gives warning, something doth approach.
What cursed foot wanders this way to-night,
To cross my obsequies, and true-love's rites?
What, with a torch!—muffle me, night, a while.

[*Retires.*

¹ The folio has these lines:—

“Sweet flower, with flowers thy bridal bed I strew;
O wo! thy canopy is dust and stones,
Which with sweet water nightly I will dew;
Or, wanting that, with tears distill'd by moans;
The obsequies that I for thee will keep
Nightly shall be, to strew thy grave and weep.”

In the text, the seven lines are printed as they appear in the quarto of 1597.

Enter ROMEO and BALTHASAR, with a torch, mattock, &c.

Rom. Give me that mattock, and the wrenching-iron.
 Hold, take this letter; early in the morning
 See thou deliver it to my lord and father.
 Give me the light. Upon thy life, I charge thee,
 Whate'er thou hear'st or see'st, stand all aloof,
 And do not interrupt me in my course.
 Why I descend into this bed of death,
 Is, partly, to behold my lady's face;
 But, chiefly, to take thence from her dead finger
 A precious ring; a ring that I must use
 In dear¹ employment; therefore hence, be gone;—
 But if thou, jealous, dost return to pry
 In what I further shall intend to do,
 By Heaven, I will tear thee joint by joint,
 And strew this hungry church-yard with thy limbs.
 The time and my intents are savage-wild;
 More fierce, and more inexorable far,
 Than empty tigers, or the roaring sea.

Bal. I will be gone, sir, and not trouble you.

Rom. So shalt thou show me friendship.—Take thou that;

Live, and be prosperous; and farewell, good fellow.

Bal. For all this same, I'll hide me hereabout;
 His looks I fear, and his intents I doubt. [*Retires.*]

Rom. Thou détestable maw, thou womb of death,
 Gorged with the dearest morsel of the earth,
 Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,
 [*Breaking open the door of the monument.*]

And, in despite, I'll cram thee with more food!

Par. This is that banished, haughty Montague,
 That murdered my love's cousin;—with which grief,
 It is supposed the fair creature died,—
 And here is come to do some villanous shame
 To the dead bodies. I will apprehend him.—

[*Advances.*]

¹ That is, in *action of importance*. The sense of the word *dear* has been explained.

Stop thy unhallowed toil, vile Montague ;
 Can vengeance be pursued further than death ?
 Condemned villain, I do apprehend thee.
 Obey, and go with me ; for thou must die.

Rom. I must, indeed ; and therefore came I hither.—
 Good gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man ;
 Fly hence and leave me ;—think upon these gone ;
 Let them affright thee.—I beseech thee, youth,
 Heap not another sin upon my head,
 By urging me to fury.—O, be gone !
 By Heaven, I love thee better than myself ;
 For I come hither armed against myself.
 Stay not ; begone ;—live, and hereafter say—
 A madman's mercy bade thee run away.

Par. I do defy thy conjurations,¹
 And do attach thee as a felon here.

Rom. Wilt thou provoke me ? Then have at thee,
 boy. [*They fight.*]

Page. O Lord ! they fight. I will go call the watch.
[*Exit Page*]

Par. O, I am slain ! [*Falls.*]—If thou be merciful,
 Open the tomb, lay me with Juliet. [*Dies.*]

Rom. In faith, I will.—Let me peruse this face ;
 Mercutio's kinsman, noble county Paris.
 What said my man, when my betossed soul
 Did not attend him as we rode ? I think
 He told me Paris should have married Juliet.
 Said he not so ? or did I dream it so ?
 Or am I mad, hearing him talk of Juliet,
 To think it was so ?—O, give me thy hand,
 One writ with me in sour misfortune's book !
 I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave ;—
 A grave ? O, no ; a lantern,² slaughtered youth ;

¹ I refuse to do as thou conjurest me to do, i. e. depart. So Constance, in *King John*, says :—

“ No, I defy all counsel, all redress.”

² A lantern may here signify what in ancient records is styled *lanternium*, i. e. a spacious round or octagonal turret, full of windows, by means of which cathedrals and sometimes halls are illuminated.

A *presence* is a public room, which is, at times, the *presence-chamber* of a sovereign.

For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes
This vault a feasting presence full of light.
Death, lie thou there, by a dead man interred.

[*Laying PARIS in the monument.*

How oft, when men are at the point of death
Have they been merry! which their keepers call
A lightning before death; O, how may I¹
Call this a lightning?—O my love! my wife!
Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty.
Thou art not conquered; beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips, and in thy cheeks,
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.—
Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?
O, what more favor can I do to thee,
Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain,
To sunder his that was thine enemy?
Forgive me, cousin!—Ah, dear Juliet,
Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe
That unsubstantial death is amorous;
And that the lean, abhorred monster keeps
Thee here in dark to be his paramour?
For fear of that, I will still stay with thee;
And never from this palace of dim night
Depart again; here, here will I remain
With worms that are thy chambermaids; O, here
Will I set up my everlasting rest;²
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
From this world-wearied flesh.—Eyes, look your last!
Arms, take your last embrace! and lips, O, you
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing death!—
Come, bitter conduct,³ come, unsavory guide!
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
The dashing rocks thy seasick, weary bark!
Here's to my love! [*Drinks.*—O true apothecary!
Thy drugs are quick.—Thus with a kiss I die. [*Dies.*

¹ The first quarto reads, "*But how,*" &c. This idea very frequently occurs in our old dramas.

² See note ¹, p. 225.

³ *Conduct* for *conductor*.

Enter, at the other end of the church-yard, FRIAR LAURENCE, with a lantern, crow, and spade.

Fri. Saint Francis be my speed! how oft to-night
Have my old feet stumbled at graves!¹—Who's there?
Who is it that consorts, so late, the dead?

Bal. Here's one, a friend, and one that knows you
well.

Fri. Bliss be upon you! Tell me, good my friend,
What torch is yond' that vainly lends his light
To grubs and eyeless skulls? as I discern,
It burneth in the Capels' monument.

Bal. It doth so, holy sir; and there's my master,
One that you love.

Fri. Who is it?

Bal. Romeo.

Fri. How long hath he been there?

Bal. Full half an hour.

Fri. Go with me to the vault.

Bal. I dare not, sir.

My master knows not but I am gone hence;
And fearfully did menace me with death,
If I did stay to look on his intents.

Fri. Stay, then, I'll go alone.—Fear comes upon me;
O, much I fear some ill, unlucky thing.

Bal. As I did sleep under this yew-tree here,
I dreamed my master and another fought,²
And that my master slew him.

Fri. Romeo? [*Advances.*

Alack, alack, what blood is this, which stains
The stony entrance of this sepulchre?—
What mean these masterless and gory swords
To lie discolored by this place of peace?

[*Enters the monument.*

Romeo! O, pale!—Who else? what, Paris too?

¹ This accident was reckoned ominous.

² This was one of the touches of nature that would have escaped the hand of any painter less attentive to it than Shakspeare. What happens to a person while he is under the manifest influence of fear, will seem to him, when he is recovered from it, like a dream.

And steeped in blood! Ah, what an unkind hour
Is guilty of this lamentable chance!—

The lady stirs. [JULIET wakes, and stirs.

Jul. O comfortable friar! where is my lord?
I do remember well where I should be,
And there I am.—Where is my Romeo?

[Noise within.

Fri. I hear some noise.—Lady, come from that nest
Of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep;
A greater power than we can contradict
Hath thwarted our intents; come, come away.
Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead;
And Paris too; come, I'll dispose of thee
Among a sisterhood of holy nuns.
Stay not to question, for the watch is coming;
Come, go, good Juliet!—[Noise again.] I dare stay
no longer. [Exit.

Jul. Go, get thee hence, for I will not away.—
What's here? a cup, closed in my true love's hand?
Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end.—
O churl! drink all; and leave no friendly drop,
To help me after?—I will kiss thy lips;
Haply, some poison yet doth hang on them,
To make me die with a restorative. [Kisses him.
Thy lips are warm!

1 *Watch.* [Within.] Lead, boy.—Which way?

Jul. Yea, noise?—then I'll be brief.—O happy
dagger! [Snatching ROMEO's dagger.
This is thy sheath. [Stabs herself.] There rust, and let
me die.¹ [Falls on ROMEO's body, and dies.

Enter Watch, with the Page of PARIS.

Page. This is the place; there, where the torch doth
burn.

1 *Watch.* The ground is bloody; search about the
church-yard:

¹ Thus the quarto of 1599. That of 1597 reads:—

“Ay, noise? then must I be resolute,
Oh, happy dagger! thou shalt end my fear;
Rest in my bosom: thus I come to thee.”

Go, some of you, whoe'er you find, attach.

[*Exeunt some.*

Pitiful sight! here lies the county slain;
And Juliet bleeding; warm, and newly dead,
Who here hath lain these two days buried.—
Go, tell the prince,—run to the Capulets,—
Raise up the Montagues,—some others search;—

[*Exeunt other Watchmen.*

We see the ground whereon these woes do lie;
But the true ground of all these piteous woes,
We cannot without circumstance descry.

Enter some of the Watch, with BALTHAZAR.

2 *Watch.* Here's Romeo's man; we found him in
the church-yard.

1 *Watch.* Hold him in safety, till the prince come
hither.

Enter another Watchman, with FRIAR LAURENCE.

3 *Watch.* Here is a friar, that trembles, sighs, and
weeps.

We took this mattock and this spade from him,
As he was coming from this church-yard side.

1 *Watch.* A great suspicion; stay the friar too.

Enter the Prince and Attendants.

Prince. What misadventure is so early up,
That calls our person from our morning's rest?

Enter CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, and others.

Cap. What should it be, that they so shriek abroad?

La. Cap. The people in the street cry—Romeo,
Some—Juliet, and some—Paris; and all run,
With open outcry, toward our monument.

Prince. What fear is this, which startles in our ears?

1 *Watch.* Sovereign, here lies the county Paris slain;

And Romeo dead ; and Juliet, dead before,
Warm, and new killed.

Prince. Search, seek, and know how this foul murder comes.

1 *Watch.* Here is a friar, and slaughtered Romeo's man ;

With instruments upon them, fit to open
These dead men's tombs.

Cap. O Heavens !—O wife ! look how our daughter bleeds !

This dagger hath mista'en,—for lo ! his house
Is empty on the back of Montague,—
And is missheathed in my daughter's bosom.¹

La. Cap. O me ! this sight of death is as a bell,
That warns my old age to a sepulchre.

Enter MONTAGUE and others.

Prince. Come, Montague ; for thou art early up,
To see thy son and heir more early down.

Mon. Alas, my liege, my wife is dead to-night ;²
Grief of my son's exile hath stopped her breath.
What further woe conspires against mine age ?

Prince. Look, and thou shalt see.

Mon. O thou untaught ! what manners is in this,
To press before thy father to a grave ?

Prince. Seal up the mouth of outrage for a while,
Till we can clear these ambiguities,
And know their spring, their head, their true descent ;
And then will I be general of your woes,
And lead you even to death. Mean time forbear,
And let mischance be slave to patience.—
Bring forth the parties of suspicion.

Fri. I am the greatest, able to do least,
Yet most suspected, as the time and place

¹ The words, "for lo ! his house is empty on the back of Montague," are to be considered parenthetical. It appears that the *dagger* was anciently worn *behind the back*.

² After this line, the quarto of 1597 adds :—

"And young Benvolio is deceased too."

Doth make against me, of this direful murder ;
And here I stand, both to impeach and purge
Myself condemned and myself excused.

Prince. Then say at once what thou dost know in this.

Fri. I will be brief, for my short date of breath
Is not so long as is a tedious tale.
Romeo, there dead, was husband to that Juliet ;
And she, there dead, that Romeo's faithful wife.
I married them ; and their stolen marriage-day
Was Tybalt's doomsday, whose untimely death
Banished the new-made bridegroom from this city ;
For whom, and not for Tybalt, Juliet pined.
You—to remove that siege of grief from her—
Betrothed, and would have married her perforce,
To county Paris.—Then comes she to me ;
And, with wild looks, bid me devise some means
To rid her from this second marriage,
Or in my cell there would she kill herself.
Then gave I her, so tutored by my art,
A sleeping potion ; which so took effect
As I intended, for it wrought on her
The form of death ; meantime I writ to Romeo,
That he should hither come as this dire night,
To help to take her from her borrowed grave,
Being the time the potion's force should cease.
But he which bore my letter, friar John,
Was stayed by accident ; and yesternight
Returned my letter back. Then all alone
At the prefixed hour of her waking,
Came I to take her from her kindred's vault ;
Meaning to keep her closely at my cell,
Till I conveniently could send to Romeo.
But, when I came, (some minute ere the time
Of her awakening,) here untimely lay
The noble Paris, and true Romeo, dead.
She wakes ; and I entreated her come forth,
And bear this work of Heaven with patience.
But then a noise did scare me from the tomb ;
And she, too desperate, would not go with me,

But (as it seems) did violence on herself.
 All this I know ; and to the marriage
 Her nurse is privy. And, if aught in this
 Miscarried by my fault, let my old life
 Be sacrificed, some hour before his time,
 Unto the rigor of severest law.

Prince. We still have known thee for a holy man.
 Where's Romeo's man ? what can he say in this ?

Bal. I brought my master news of Juliet's death ;
 And then in post he came from Mantua,
 To this same place, to this same monument.
 This letter he early bade me give his father ;
 And threatened me with death, going in the vault,
 If I departed not, and left him there.

Prince. Give me the letter ; I will look on it.—
 Where is the county's page, that raised the watch ?
 Sirrah, what made your master in this place ?

Page. He came with flowers to strew his lady's
 grave ;

And bade me stand aloof, and so I did.
 Anon comes one with light to ope the tomb ;
 And, by and by, my master drew on him ;
 And then I ran away to call the watch.

Prince. This letter doth make good the friar's words,
 Their course of love, the tidings of her death ;
 And here he writes—that he did buy a poison
 Of a poor 'pothecary, and therewithal
 Came to this vault to die, and lie with Juliet.—
 Where be these enemies ? Capulet ! Montague !—
 See, what a scourge is laid upon your hate,
 That Heaven finds means to kill your joys with love !
 And I, for winking at your discords too,
 Have lost a brace of kinsmen¹ ;—all are punished.

¹ Mercutio and Paris. Mercutio is expressly called the prince's kinsman in Act iii. Sc. 4 ; and that Paris was also the prince's kinsman, may be inferred from the following passages :—Capulet, speaking of the count, in the fourth act, describes him as "a gentleman of princely parentage ;" and after he is killed, Romeo says :—

" — Let me peruse this face ;
Mercutio's kinsman, noble county Paris."

Cap. O brother Montague, give me thy hand.
This is my daughter's jointure, for no more
Can I demand.

Mon. But I can give thee more.
For I will raise her statue in pure gold;
That, while Verona by that name is known,
There shall no figure at such rate be set,
As that of true and faithful Juliet.

Cap. As rich shall Romeo by his lady lie;
Poor sacrifices of our enmity!

Prince. A glooming¹ peace this morning with it
brings;
The sun for sorrow will not show his head.
Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;
Some shall be pardoned, and some punished.²
For never was a story of more woe,
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.³ [Exeunt.

¹ The quarto of 1597 reads, "A gloomy peace." To *gloom* is an ancient verb, used by Spenser and other old writers.

² This line has reference to the poem from which the fable is taken; in which the nurse is banished for concealing the marriage; Romeo's servant set at liberty, because he had only acted in obedience to his master's orders; the apothecary is hanged; while friar Laurence was permitted to retire to a hermitage near Verona, where he ended his life in penitence and tranquillity.

³ Shakspeare, in his revision of this play, has not effected the alteration by introducing any new incidents, but merely by adding to the length of the scenes.

THIS play is one of the most pleasing of our Author's performances. The scenes are busy and various, the incidents numerous and important, the catastrophe irresistibly affecting, and the process of the action carried on with such probability, at least with such congruity to popular opinions, as tragedy requires.

Here is one of the few attempts of Shakspeare to exhibit the conversation of gentlemen, to represent the airy sprightliness of juvenile elegance. Dryden mentions a tradition, which might easily reach his time, of a declaration made by Shakspeare, that *he was obliged to kill Mercutio in the third Act, lest he should have been killed by him*. Yet he thinks him *no such formidable person, but that he might have lived through the play and died in his bed*, without danger to the Poet. Dryden well knew, had he been in quest of truth, in a pointed sentence, that more regard is commonly had to the words than the thought, and that it is very seldom to be rigorously understood. Mercutio's wit, gayety, and courage, will always procure him friends that wish him a longer life; but his death is not precipitated; he has lived out the time allotted him in the construction of the play; nor do I doubt the ability of Shakspeare to have continued his existence, though some of his sallies are, perhaps, out of the reach of Dryden; whose genius was not very fertile of merriment, nor ductile to humor, but acute, argumentative, comprehensive, and sublime.

The nurse is one of the characters in which the Author delighted. He has, with great subtilty of distinction, drawn her at once loquacious and secret, obsequious and insolent, trusty and dishonest.

His comic scenes are happily wrought; but his pathetic strains are always polluted with some unexpected depravations.* His persons, however distressed, *have a conceit left them in their misery, a miserable conceit*.

JOHNSON.

* A. W. Schlegel has answered this remark at length, in a detailed criticism upon this tragedy, published in the *Horen*, a journal conducted by Schiller in 1794—1795, and made accessible to the English reader in Ollier's *Literary Miscellany*, Part I. In his *Lectures on Dramatic Literature* (vol. ii. p. 135, Eng. translation) will be found some further sensible remarks upon the "conceits" here stigmatized. It should be remembered that *playing on words* was a very favorite species of wit combat with our ancestors. "With children, as well as nations of the most simple manners, a great inclination to playing on words is often displayed [they cannot therefore be both *puerile* and *unnatural*; if the first charge is founded, the second cannot be so]. In *Homer* we find several examples; the *Books of Moses*, the oldest written memorial of the primitive world, are, it is well known, full of them. On the other hand, poets of a very cultivated taste, or orators like *Cicero*, have delighted in them. Whoever, in *Richard the Second*, is disgusted with the affecting play of words of the dying *John of Gaunt*, on his own name, let him remember that the same thing occurs in the *Ajax* of *Sophocles*."

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

THE original story on which this play is founded may be found in Saxo Grammaticus, the Danish historian. From thence Belleforest adopted it in his collection of novels, in seven volumes, which he began in 1564, and continued to publish through succeeding years. It was from Belleforest that the old black letter prose "*Hystorie of Hamblet*" was translated; the earliest edition of which, known to the commentators, was dated in 1608; but it is supposed that there were earlier impressions.

The following passage is found in an Epistle, by Thomas Nashe, prefixed to Greene's *Arcadia*, which was published in 1589:—"I will turn back to my first text of studies of delight, and talk a little in friendship with a few of our rival translators. It is a common practice now-a-days, among a sort of shifting companions, that runne through every art, and thrive by none, to leave the trade of *Noverint* [i. e. the law], whereunto they were born, and busie themselves with the endeavours of art, that could scarcely latinize their neck-verse, if they should have neede; yet English *Seneca*, read by candle-light, yeelds many good sentences, as *Bloud is a beggar*, and so forth: and if you entreat him faire in a frosty morning, he will affoord you whole *Hamlets*, I should say, Handfuls of tragical speeches. But O grief! *Tempus edax rerum*—what is it that will last always? The sea exhaled by drops will in continuance be drie; and *Seneca*, let bloud line by line, and page by page, at length must needs die to our stage."

It is manifest, from this passage, that some play on the story of Hamlet had been exhibited before the year 1589. Malone thinks that it was not Shakspeare's drama, but an elder performance, on which, with the aid of the old prose History of Hamblet, his tragedy was formed.

In a tract, entitled "*Wits Miserie, or the World's Madnesse*, discovering the incarnate Devils of the Age," published by Thomas Lodge, in 1596, one of the devils is said to be "a foule lubber, and looks as pale as the vizard of the *ghost*, who cried so miserably at the theatre, *Hamlet, revenge*." But it is supposed that this also may refer to an elder performance.

Dr. Percy possessed a copy of Speght's edition of Chaucer, which had been Gabriel Harvey's, who had written his name and the date, 1598, both at the beginning and end of the volume, and many remarks in the intermediate leaves; among which are these words:—"The younger sort take much delight in Shakspeare's *Venus and Adonis*; but his *Lucrece*, and his tragedy of *Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke*, have it in them to please the wiser sort." Malone doubts whether this was written in 1598, because *translated Tasso* is named in another note; but it is not necessary that the allusion should be to Fairfax's translation, which was not printed till 1600: it may refer to the version of the first five books of the *Jerusalem*, published by R. C[arew], in 1594.

We may, therefore, safely place the date of the first composition of *Hamlet* at least as early as 1597; and, for reasons adduced by Mr. George Chalmers, we may presume that it was revised, and the additions made to it in the year 1600.

The first entry on the Stationers' books is by James Roberts, July 26, 1602; and a copy of the play in its first state, printed for N. L. and John Trundell, in 1603, has recently been discovered. As in the case of the earliest impressions of *Romeo and Juliet*, and the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, this edition of *Hamlet* appears to have been either printed from an imperfect manuscript of the prompt books, or the playhouse copy, or stolen from the Author's papers. It is next to impossible that it can have been taken down during the representation, as some have supposed was the case with the other two plays.

The variations of this early copy from the play of *Hamlet*, in its improved state, are too numerous and striking to admit a doubt of the play having been subsequently revised, amplified, and altered by the Poet. There are even some variations in the plot; the principal of which are, that Horatio announces to the queen, Hamlet's unexpected return from his voyage to England; and that the queen is expressly declared to be innocent of any participation in the murder of Hamlet's father, and privy to his intention of revenging his death. There are also some few lines and passages which do not appear in the revised copy. The principal variations are noticed in the course of the notes.*

It again issued from the press in 1604, in its corrected and amended state, and in the title-page is stated to be "newly imprinted, and enlarged to almost as much again as it was, according to the true and perfect copy." From these words, Malone had drawn the natural conclusion, that a former less perfect copy had issued from the press; but his star was not propitious; he never saw it. Though it is said to have formed part of the collection of sir Thomas Hanmer, it only came to light at the commencement of the present year [1825]; too late, alas! even to gratify the enthusiasm of his zealous friend, that worthy man, James Boswell;

* There are some singular variations in the names of the Dramatis Personæ. *Cornelius* and *Montano* are the names given to the *Polonius* and *Reynaldo* of the revised play; for *Rosencrantz* and *Guildestoorn*, we have *Rosencraft* and *Gilderstone*; and *Oerick* is merely designated a *Braggart Gentleman*.

upon whom devolved the office of giving to the world the accumulated labors of Malone's latter years, devoted to the illustration of Shakspeare.

The character of Hamlet has been frequently discussed, and with a variety of contradictory opinions. Johnson and Steevens have made severe animadversions upon some parts of his conduct. A celebrated writer of Germany ~~has~~ very skilfully pointed out the cause of the defects in Hamlet's character, which unfit him for the dreadful office to which he is called. "It is clear to me (says Goëthé) that Shakspeare's intention was to exhibit the effects of a great action, imposed as a duty upon a mind too feeble for its accomplishment. In this sense I find the character consistent throughout. Here is an oak planted in a china vase, proper to receive only the most delicate flowers. The roots strike out, and the vessel flies to pieces. A pure, noble, highly moral disposition, but without that energy of soul which constitutes the hero, sinks under a load which it can neither support nor resolve to abandon altogether. *All* his obligations are sacred to him; but this alone is above his powers! An impossibility is required at his hands; not an impossibility in itself, but that which is so to him. Observe how he shifts, turns, hesitates, advances, and recedes! how he is continually reminded and reminding himself of his great commission! which he, nevertheless, in the end, seems almost entirely to lose sight of; and this without ever recovering his former tranquillity."^{*}

Dr. Akenside suggested that the madness of Hamlet is not altogether feigned; and the notion has of late been revived. Dr. Ferriar, in his *Essay towards a Theory of Apparitions*, has termed the state of mind which Shakspeare exhibits to us in *Hamlet*,—as the consequence of conflicting passions and events operating on a frame of acute sensibility,—*latent lunacy*.

"It has often occurred to me (says Dr. F.) that Shakspeare's character of Hamlet can only be understood on this principle:—He feigns madness for political purposes, while the Poet means to represent his understanding as really (and unconsciously to himself) unhinged by the cruel circumstances in which he is placed. The horror of the communication made by his father's spectre, the necessity of belying his attachment to an innocent and deserving object, the certainty of his mother's guilt, and the supernatural impulse by which he is goaded to an act of assassination abhorrent to his nature, are causes sufficient to overwhelm and distract a mind previously disposed to 'weakness and to melancholy,' and originally full of tenderness and natural affection. By referring to the play, it will be seen that his real insanity is only developed after the mock play. Then, in place of a systematic conduct, conducive to his purposes, he becomes irresolute, inconsequent; and the plot appears to stand unaccountably still. Instead of striking at his object, he resigns himself to the current of events, and sinks at length, ignobly, under the stream."[†]

^{*} William Meister's *Apprenticeship*, b. iv. ch. 13.

[†] *Essay on the Theory of Apparitions*, p. 111—115.

A comedian of considerable talents has entered at large into the question of Hamlet's madness, and has endeavored to show that the Poet meant to represent him as insane.* Mr. Boswell, on the contrary, in a very judicious and ingenious review of Hamlet's character, combats the supposition, and thinks it entirely without foundation. He argues that "the sentiments which fall from Hamlet in his soliloquies, or in confidential communication with Horatio, evince not only a sound but an acute and vigorous understanding. His misfortunes, indeed, and a sense of shame, from the hasty and incestuous marriage of his mother, have sunk him into a state of *weakness and melancholy*; but though *his mind is enfeebled*, it is by no means deranged. It would have been little in the manner of Shakspeare to introduce two persons in the same play whose intellects were disordered; but he has rather, in this instance, as in King Lear, a second time effected what, as far as I can recollect, no other writer has ever ventured to attempt—the exhibition, on the same scene, of real and fictitious madness in contrast with each other. In carrying his design into execution, Hamlet feels no difficulty in imposing upon the king, whom he detests; or upon Polonius, and his school-fellows, whom he despises: but the case is very different indeed in his interviews with Ophelia; aware of the submissive mildness of her character, which leads her to be subject to the influence of her father and her brother, he cannot venture to entrust her with his secret. In her presence, therefore, he has not only to assume a disguise, but to restrain himself from those expressions of affection, which a lover must find it most difficult to repress in the presence of his mistress. In this tumult of conflicting feelings, he is led to overact his part, from a fear of falling below it; and thus gives an appearance of rudeness and harshness to that which is, in fact, a painful struggle to conceal his tenderness."†

Mr. Richardson, in his Essay on the Character of Hamlet, has well observed that "the spirit of that remarkable scene with Ophelia, where he tells her, 'Get thee to a nunnery,' is frequently misunderstood; and especially by the players. At least, it does not appear to have been the Poet's intention that the air and manner of Hamlet, in this scene, should be perfectly grave and serious; nor is there any thing in the dialogue to justify the grave and tragic tone with which it is frequently spoken. Let Hamlet be represented as delivering himself in a light and airy, unconcerned and thoughtless manner, and the rudeness so much complained of will disappear." His conduct to Ophelia is intended to confirm and publish the notion he would convey of his pretended insanity, which could not be marked by any circumstance so strongly as that of treating her with harshness or indifference. The sincerity and ardor of his passion for her had undergone no change; he could not explain himself to her; and, in the difficult and trying circumstances in which he was placed, had, therefore, no alternative.

* On the Madness of Hamlet, by Mr. W. Farren.—*London Magazine*, for April, 1834.

† Boswell's edition of Malone's Shakspeare, vol. vii. p. 536.

The Poet, indeed, has marked with a master hand the amiable and polished character of Hamlet. Ophelia designates him as having been

“ — the glass of fashion, and the mould of form ; ”

and, though circumstances have unsettled him, and thrown over his natural disposition clouds of melancholy, the kindness of his disposition, and his natural hilarity, break through on every occasion which arises to call them forth.

Mr. Boswell has remarked, that “ the scene with the grave-diggers shows, in a striking point of view, his good-natured affability. The reflections which follow afford new proofs of his amiable character. The place where he stands, the frame of his own thoughts, and the objects which surround him, suggest the vanity of all human pursuits ; but there is nothing harsh or caustic in his satire ; his observations are dictated rather by feelings of sorrow than of anger ; and the sprightliness of his wit, which misfortune has repressed, but cannot altogether extinguish, has thrown over the whole a truly pathetic cast of humorous sadness. Those gleams of sunshine, which serve only to show us the scattered fragments of a brilliant imagination, crushed and broken by calamity, are much more affecting than a long, uninterrupted train of monotonous woe.”

“ Ophelia is a character almost too exquisitely touching to be dwelt upon. O rose of May ! O flower too soon faded ! Her love, her madness, her death, are described with the truest touches of tenderness and pathos. It is a character which nobody but Shakspeare could have drawn in the way that he has done ; and to the conception of which there is not the smallest approach, except in some of the old romantic ballads.”*

* Hazlitt's Characters of Shakspeare's Plays, p. 112.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

CLAUDIUS, *King of Denmark.*
 HAMLET, *Son to the former, and Nephew to the present, King.*
 POLONIUS, *Lord Chamberlain.*
 HORATIO, *Friend to Hamlet.*
 LAERTES, *Son to Polonius.*
 VOLTIMAND, }
 CORNELIUS, } *Courtiers.*
 ROSENCRANTZ, }
 GUILDENSTERN, }
 OSRIC, *a Courtier.*
 Another Courtier.
 A Priest.
 MARCELLUS, }
 BERNARDO, } *Officers.*
 FRANCISCO, *a Soldier.*
 REYNALDO, *Servant to Polonius.*
 A Captain. An Ambassador.
 Ghost of Hamlet's Father.
 FORTINBRAS, *Prince of Norway.*

GERTRUDE, *Queen of Denmark, and Mother to Hamlet.*
 OPHELIA, *Daughter to Polonius.*

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Players, Grave-diggers,
 Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.

SCENE. Elsinore.

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK.

ACT I.

SCENE I. Elsinore. *A Platform before the Castle.*

FRANCISCO *on his post.* Enter to him, BERNARDO.

Bernardo. Who's there ?

Fran. Nay, answer me ;¹ stand, and unfold Yourself.

Ber. Long live the king !

Fran. Bernardo ?

Ber. He.

Fran. You come most carefully upon your hour.

Ber. 'Tis now struck twelve ; get thee to bed, Francisco.

Fran. For this relief, much thanks ; 'tis bitter cold, And I am sick at heart.

Ber. Have you had quiet guard ?

Fran. Not a mouse stirring.

Ber. Well, good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals² of my watch, bid them make haste.

¹ i. e. *me*, who have a right to demand the watchword ; which appears to have been, "Long live the king."

² Shakspeare uses *rivals* for *associates*, *partners* ; and *competitor* has the same sense throughout these plays. It is the original sense of *rivalis*.

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Fran. I think I hear them.—Stand, ho ! Who is there ?

Hor. Friends to this ground.

Mar. And liegemen to the Dane.

Fran. Give you good night.

Mar. O, farewell, honest soldier ;

Who hath relieved you ?

Fran. Bernardo hath my place.

Give you good night. [*Exit FRANCISCO.*]

Mar. Holla ! Bernardo !

Ber. Say,

What, is Horatio there ?

Hor. A piece of him.

Ber. Welcome, Horatio ; welcome, good Marcellus.

Hor. What, has this thing appeared again to-night ?

Ber. I have seen nothing.

Mar. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy ;

And will not let belief take hold of him,

Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us.

Therefore I have entreated him along

With us to watch the minutes of this night ;

That, if again this apparition come,

He may approve¹ our eyes, and speak to it.

Hor. Tush ! tush ! 'twill not appear.

Ber. Sit down awhile ;

And let us once again assail your ears,

That are so fortified against our story,

What we two nights have seen.

Hor. Well, sit we down,

And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

Ber. Last night of all,

When yon same star, that's westward from the pole,

Had made his course to illume that part of heaven

Where now it burns, Marcellus, and myself,

The bell then beating one,—

Mar. Peace, break thee off ; look, where it comes again !

¹ *To approve is to confirm.*

Enter Ghost.

Ber. In the same figure like the king that's dead.

Mar. Thou art a scholar ; speak to it, Horatio.¹

Ber. Looks it not like the king ? Mark it, Horatio.

Hor. Most like ;—it harrows² me with fear and wonder.

Ber. It would be spoke to.

Mar. Speak to it, Horatio.

Hor. What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,

Together with that fair and warlike form

In which the majesty of buried Denmark

Did sometimes march ? By Heaven, I charge thee, speak.

Mar. It is offended.

Ber. See ! it stalks away.

Hor. Stay ; speak : speak, I charge thee speak.

[*Exit Ghost.*

Mar. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

Ber. How now, Horatio ? you tremble, and look pale ;

Is not this something more than fantasy ?

What think you of it ?

Hor. Before my God, I might not this believe,

Without the sensible and true avouch

Of mine own eyes.

Mar. Is it not like the king ?

Hor. As thou art to thyself.

Such was the very armor he had on,

When he the ambitious Norway combated ;

So frowned he once, when, in an angry parle,

He smote the sledded Polack³ on the ice.

'Tis strange.

¹ It was a vulgar notion, that a supernatural being could only be spoken to, with effect, by persons of learning ; exorcisms being usually practised by the clergy in Latin.

² The first quarto reads, "it horrors me."

³ i. e. the *sledged Polander* (*Polaque*, Fr.). The old copy reads *Pollax*.

Mar. Thus, twice before, and jump¹ at this dead hour,

With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

Hor. In what particular thought to work, I know not;²

But, in the gross and scope of mine opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

Mar. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,

Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land;
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war;
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week:
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-laborer with the day;
Who is't that can inform me?

Hor. That can I;

At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,
Whose image even but now appeared to us,
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto pricked on by a most emulate pride,
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet
(For so this side of our known world esteemed him)
Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a sealed compact,
Well ratified by law and heraldry,
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands,
Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror:
Against the which, a moiety competent
Was gaged by our king; which had returned
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,

¹ *Jump.* So the quarto of 1603, and that of 1604. The folio reads *just*. *Jump* and *just* were synonymous. So in Chapman's *May Day*, 1611:—

“Your appointment was *jumpe* at three with me.”

² That is, “what particular train of thought to follow,” &c. The first quarto reads:—

“In what particular to work I know not.”

Had he been vanquisher ; as, by the same co-mart,¹
 And carriage of the article designed,²
 His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
 Of unimproved mettle hot and full,³
 Hath in the skirts of Norway, here and there,
 Sharked⁴ up a list of landless resolute,
 For food and diet, to some enterprise
 That hath a stomach⁵ in't ; which is no other,
 (As it doth well appear unto our state,)
 But to recover of us, by strong hand,
 And terms compulsative, those 'foresaid lands
 So by his father lost. And this, I take it,
 Is the main motive of our preparations ;
 The source of this our watch ; and the chief head
 Of this post-haste and romage⁶ in the land.

⁷ [*Ber.* I think it be no other, but even so.
 Well may it sort,⁸ that this portentous figure
 Comes armed through our watch ; so like the king
 That was, and is, the question⁹ of these wars.

Hor. A mote it is, to trouble the mind's eye.
 In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
 A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
 The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
 Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.

* * * * *

As, stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,

¹ *Co-mart* is the reading of the quarto of 1604 ; the folio reads *covenant*. *Co-mart*, it is presumed, means a *joint bargain*. No other instance of the word is known.

² i. e. "and *import* of that article *marked out* for that purpose."

³ The first quarto reads, "Of *unapproved*." Dr. Johnson explains it, "full of spirit, not regulated or guided by knowledge or experience," and has been hitherto uncontradicted.

⁴ i. e. *snapped* up or *taken* up hastily. *Scroccare* is properly to do any thing at another man's cost, to *shark* or *shift* for any thing.

⁵ *Stomach* is used for *determined purpose*.

⁶ *Romage*, now spelt *rummage*, and in common use as a verb, for making a thorough search, a busy and tumultuous movement.

⁷ All the lines within crotchets, in this play, are omitted in the folio of 1623. The title-pages of the quartos of 1604 and 1605 declare this play to be "enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect copie."

⁸ i. e. suit, accord.

⁹ i. e. theme or subject.

¹⁰ A line or more is here supposed to be lost.

Disasters in the sun ; and the moist star,¹
 Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
 Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.
 And even the like precurse of fierce events,—
 As harbingers preceding still the fates,
 And prologue to the omen² coming on,
 Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
 Unto our climatures and countrymen.—]

Re-enter Ghost.

But, soft ; behold ! lo, where it comes again !
 I'll cross it, though it blast me.—Stay, illusion !
 If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,
 Speak to me.
 If there be any good thing to be done,
 That may to thee do ease, and grace to me,
 Speak to me.
 If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
 Which, happily, foreknowing, may avoid,
 O, speak !
 Or, if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
 Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
 For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
 [Cock crows.

Speak of it ;—stay, and speak !—Stop it, Marcellus.

Mar. Shall I strike at it with my partisan ?

Hor. Do, if it will not stand.

Ber.

'Tis here !

Hor. 'Tis here !

Mar. 'Tis gone !

[*Exit Ghost*—

We do it wrong, being so majestic,
 To offer it the show of violence ;
 For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
 And our vain blows malicious mockery.

Ber. It was about to speak when the cock crew.

Hor. And then it started like a guilty thing
 Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,

¹ i. e. the moon.

² *Omen* is here put, by a figure of speech, for *predicted event*.

The cock, that is the trumpet of the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day ; and at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
The extravagant and erring¹ spirit hies
To his confine ; and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

Mar. It faded on the crowing of the cock.²
Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Savior's birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long.
And then they say no spirit dares stir abroad ;
The nights are wholesome ; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes,³ nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallowed and so gracious⁴ is the time.

Hor. So have I heard, and do in part believe it.
But look, the morn,⁵ in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill.
Break we our watch up ; and, by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Into young Hamlet ; for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty ?

Mar. Let's do't, I pray ; and I this morning know
Where we shall find him most convenient. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *The same. A Room of State in the same.*

Enter the King, Queen, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES, VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and Attendants.

King. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death

¹ " *Extra-vagans*, wandering about, going beyond bounds." *Erring* *erraticus*, *straying* or roving up and down.

² This is a very ancient superstition.

³ I. e. *blasts* or *strikes*.

⁴ *Gracious* is sometimes used by Shakspeare for *graced*, *favoured*.

⁵ First quarto, "sun."

The memory be green ; and that it us befitted
 To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
 To be contracted in one brow of woe ;
 Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature,
 That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
 Together with remembrance of ourselves.
 Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
 The imperial jointress of this warlike state,
 Have we, as 'twere, with a defeated joy,—
 With one auspicious, and one dropping eye ;¹
 With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage,
 In equal scale weighing delight and dole,—²
 Taken to wife ; nor have we herein barred
 Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
 With this affair along.—For all, our thanks.

Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,—
 Holding a weak supposal of our worth ;
 Or thinking, by our late dear brother's death,
 Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
 Colleague'd³ with this dream of his advantage,
 He hath not failed to pester us with message,
 Importing the surrender of those lands
 Lost by his father, with all bands⁴ of law,
 To our most valiant brother.—So much for him.
 Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting.
 Thus much the business is. We have here writ
 To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,—
 Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
 Of this his nephew's purpose,—to suppress
 His further gait⁵ herein ; in that the levies,
 The lists, and full proportions, are all made
 Out of his subject :—and we here despatch
 You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
 For bearers of this greeting to old Norway ;

¹ Thus the folio. The quarto reads :—

“ With *an* auspicious and a dropping eye.”

² i. e. grief.

³ i. e. united to this strange fancy of, &c.

⁴ The folio reads *bonds* ; but *bands* and *bonds* signified the same thing in the Poet's time.

⁵ *Gait* here signifies *course*, *progress*.

Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the king, more than the scope
Of these related articles allow.¹

Farewell ; and let your haste commend your duty.

Cor. Vol. In that, and all things, will we show our
duty.

King. We doubt it nothing ; heartily farewell.

[*Exeunt* VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.]

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you ?

You told us of some suit ; what is't, Laertes ?

You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,

And lose your voice. What wouldst thou beg, Laertes,

That shall not be my offer, not thy asking ?

The head is not more native to the heart,

The hand more instrumental to the mouth,

Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.²

What wouldst thou have, Laertes ?

Laer.

My dread lord,

Your leave and favor to return to France ;

From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,

To show my duty in your coronation ;

Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,

My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France,

And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

King. Have you your father's leave ? What says
Polonius ?

Pol. He hath, my lord, [wrung from me my slow
leave,

By laborsome petition ; and, at last,

Upon his will, I sealed my hard consent.]

I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

King. Take thy fair hour, Laertes ; time be thine,

¹ The folio reads, " More than the scope of these *dilated* articles allow." We have not scrupled to read *related*, upon the authority of the first quarto, as more intelligible. The first quarto reads :—

" — no further personal power
To business with the king
Than those *related* articles do show."

² The various parts of the body enumerated, are not more *allied*, more *necessary* to each other, than the throne of Denmark (i. e. the king) is bound to your father to do him service.

And thy best graces spend it at thy will.¹—

But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—

Ham. A little more than kin, and less than kind.²

[*Aside.*]

King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Ham. Not so, my lord, I am too much i' the sun.

Queen. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.

Do not, forever, with thy veiled lids,³

Seek for thy noble father in the dust.

Thou know'st 'tis common; all that live must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

Ham. Ay, madam, it is common.

Queen.

If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee?

Ham. Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not seems.

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,

Nor customary suits of solemn black,

Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,

No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,

Nor the dejected havior of the visage,

Together with all forms, modes, shows of grief,

That can denote me truly. These, indeed, seem,

For they are actions that a man might play;

But I have that within which passeth show;

These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

King. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature,
Hamlet,

¹ In the first quarto this passage stands thus:—

“*King.* With all our heart, Laertes, fare thee well.

Laert. I in all love and dutie take my leave.

[*Exit.*”]

The king's speech may be thus explained:—“Take an auspicious hour, Laertes; be your time your own, and thy best virtues guide thee in spending of it at thy will.” Johnson thought that we should read, “And my best graces.”

² *A little more than kin* has been rightly said to allude to the double relationship of the king to Hamlet, as uncle and step-father; his *kindred* by blood and *kindred* by marriage. By *less than kind*, Hamlet means *degenerate and base*. Dr. Johnson says that *kind* is the Teutonic word for *child*; that Hamlet means that he was something more than cousin, and less than son.

³ i. e. with eyes cast down.

To give these mourning duties to your father.
 But you must know, your father lost a father;
 That father lost, lost his;¹ and the survivor bound
 In filial obligation, for some term,
 To do obsequious sorrow.² But to perséver
 In obstinate condolément,³ is a course
 Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief:
 It shows a will most incorrect to Heaven;
 A heart unfortified, or mind impatient;
 An understanding simple and unschooled.
 For what we know must be, and is as common
 As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
 Why should we, in our peevish opposition,
 Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to Heaven,
 A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
 To reason most absurd; whose common theme
 Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
 From the first corse, till he that died to-day,
This must be so. We pray you, throw to earth
 This unprevailing⁴ woe; and think of us
 As of a father. For let the world take note,
 You are the most immediate to our throne;
 And with no less nobility of love,⁵
 Than that which dearest father bears his son,
 Do I impart⁶ toward you. For your intent
 In going back to school in Wittenberg,
 It is most retrograde to our desire;
 And, we beseech you, bend you to remain
 Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
 Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son. *

Queen. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet;
 I pray thee, stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.

Ham. I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

King. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply;

¹ The first quarto reads, "That father *dead*, lost his."

² *Obsequious* is used with an allusion to *obsequies*, or funeral rites.

³ *Condolément* for *grief*.

⁴ *Unprevailing* was used in the sense of *unavailing*, as late as Dryden's time.

⁵ This was a common form of figurative expression.

⁶ i. e. *dispense*, *bestow*.

Be as ourself in Denmark.—Madam, come ;
 This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet
 Sits smiling to my heart ; in grace whereof
 No jocund health, that Denmark drinks to-day,
 But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell ;
 And the king's rouse¹ the heaven shall bruit again,
 Respeaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Exeunt* King, Queen, Lords, &c., POLO-
 NIUS, and LAERTES.]

Ham. O that this too, too solid flesh would melt,
 Thaw, and resolve² itself into a dew !
 Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
 His canon³ 'gainst self-slaughter ! O God ! O God !
 How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
 Seem to me all the uses of this world !
 Fie on't ! O fie ! 'tis an unweeded garden
 That grows to seed ; things rank, and gross in nature,
 Possess it merely.⁴ That it should come to this !
 But two months dead !—nay, not so much, not two :
 So excellent a king ; that was, to this,
 Hyperion⁵ to a satyr ; so loving to my mother,
 That he might not beteem⁶ the winds of heaven
 Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth !
 Must I remember ? why, she would hang on him,
 As if increase of appetite had grown
 By what it fed on. And yet, within a month,—
 Let me not think on't ;—Frailty, thy name is woman !—

¹ The quarto of 1603 reads :—

“ The rouse the king shall drink unto the prince.”

A *rouse* appears to have been a deep draught to the health of any one ; it may be only an abridgment of *carouse*.

² To *resolve* had anciently the same meaning as to *dissolve*.

³ The old copy reads, *cannon* ; but this was the old spelling of *canon*, a law or decree.

⁴ i. e. *solely*, wholly.

⁵ Hyperion, or Apollo, always represented as a model of beauty.

⁶ i. e. *deign to allow*. Steevens had the merit of pointing out the passage in Golding's Ovid, which settles the meaning of the word :—

“ ——— Yet could he not *beteeme*

The shape of any other bird than egle for to seeme.”

“ ——— nulla tamen alite verti

Dignatur, nisi quæ possit sua fulmine ferre.”

A little month ; or ere those shoes were old,
 With which she followed my poor father's body,
 Like Niobe, all tears ;—why she, even she,—
 O Heaven ! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,¹
 Would have mourned longer,—married with my uncle,
 My father's brother ; but no more like my father,
 Than I to Hercules. Within a month,—
 Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
 Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,—
 She married.—O most wicked speed, to post
 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets !
 It is not, nor it cannot come to, good ;
 But break, my heart ; for I must hold my tongue !

Enter HORATIO, BERNARDO, and MARCELLUS.

Hor. Hail to your lordship !

Ham. I am glad to see you well ;
 Horatio,—or I do forget myself.

Hor. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

Ham. Sir, my good friend ; I'll change that name
 with you.

And what make you² from Wittenberg, Horatio ?—
 Marcellus ?

Mar. My good lord,—

Ham. I am very glad to see you ; good even, sir.
 But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg ?

Hor. A truant disposition, good my lord.

Ham. I would not hear your enemy say so ;
 Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,

¹ "Discourse of reason" was the phraseology of Shakspeare's time ; and, indeed, the Poet again uses the same language in *Troilus and Cressida*, Act ii. Sc. 2 :—

" ————— is your blood
 So madly hot, that no *discourse of reason*—
 ————— can qualify the same ? "

In the language of the schools, "*Discourse* is that rational act of the mind by which we deduce or infer one thing from another." *Discourse of reason*, therefore, may mean *ration* or *reasoning*. Brutes have not this *reasoning faculty*, though they have what has been called *instinct* and memory. The first quarto reads, "a beast devoid of reason."

² i. e. what do you ?

To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself: I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?

We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

Hor. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

Ham. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

Hor. Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.

Ham. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral baked
meats

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

'Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven,

Or¹ ever I had seen that day, Horatio!

My father,—methinks I see my father.

Hor.

Oh where,

My lord?

Ham. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Hor. I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

Ham. He was a man, take him for all in all,

I shall not look upon his like again.

Hor. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Ham. Saw! who?

Hor. My lord, the king, your father.

Ham. The king, my father?—

Hor. Season your admiration for a while

With an attent ear; till I may deliver,

Upon the witness of these gentlemen,

This marvel to you.

Ham. For God's love, let me hear.

Hor. Two nights together had these gentlemen,

Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,

In the dead waste and middle of the night,²

Been thus encountered: A figure like your father,

Armed at all points, exactly, cap-à-pé,

Appears before them, and, with solemn march,

¹ This is the reading of the quarto of 1604. The first quarto and the folio read, "*Ere* I had ever."

² The first quarto, 1603, has:—

"In the dead *vast* and middle of the night."

We have "*that vast of night*" in *The Tempest*, Act i. Sc. 2.

Goes slow and stately by them. Thrice he walked,
By their oppressed and fear-surprised eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distilled¹
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb, and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did;
And I, with them, the third night kept the watch;
Where, as they had delivered, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes. I knew your father;
These hands are not more like.

Ham. But where was this?

Hor. My lord, upon the platform where we watched.

Ham. Did you not speak to it?

Hor. My lord, I did.

But answer made it none; yet once, methought,
It lifted up its head, and did address
Itself to motion, like as it would speak;
But, even then, the morning cock crew loud;
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
And vanished from our sight.

Ham. 'Tis very strange.

Hor. As I do live, my honored lord, 'tis true;
And we did think it writ down in our duty,
To let you know of it.

Ham. Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to-night?

All. We do, my lord.

Ham. Armed, say you?

All. Armed, my lord.

Ham. From top to toe?

All. My lord, from head to foot.

Ham. Then saw you not
His face?

Hor. O yes, my lord; he wore his beaver² up.

Ham. What, looked he frowningly?

Hor. A countenance more
In sorrow than in anger.

¹ The folio reads *bestilled*.

² That part of the helmet which may be lifted up. •

Ham. Pale, or red?

Hor. Nay, very pale.

Ham. And fixed his eyes upon you?

Hor. Most constantly.

Ham. I would I had been there.

Hor. It would have much amazed you.

Ham. Very like,

Very like. Staid it long?

Hor. While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

Mar. Ber. Longer, longer.

Hor. Not when I saw it.

Ham. His beard was grizzled? no?

Hor. It was as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silvered.

Ham. I will watch to-night;
Perchance 'twill walk again.

Hor. I warrant you it will.

Ham. If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape,
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto concealed this sight,
Let it be tenable¹ in your silence still;
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue;
I will requite your loves. So, fare you well.
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

All. Our duty to your honor.

Ham. Your loves, as mine to you. Farewell.

[*Exeunt* HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and
BERNARDO.]

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;
I doubt some foul play. 'Would the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul. Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.
[*Exit.*]

¹ The quarto of 1603 reads *tenible*; the other quartos, *tenable*; the folio of 1623, *treble*.

SCENE III. *A Room in Polonius's House.**Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.*

Laer. My necessities are embarked ; farewell.
 And, sister, as the winds give benefit,
 And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
 But let me hear from you.

Oph. Do you doubt that ?

Laer. For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favor,
 Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood ;
 A violet in the youth of primy nature,
 Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
 The perfume and suppliance of a minute ;¹
 No more.

Oph. No more but so ?

Laer. Think it no more.

For nature, crescent, does not grow alone
 In thews² and bulk ; but, as this temple waxes,
 The inward service of the mind and soul
 Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now ;
 And now no soil, nor cautel³ doth besmirch
 The virtue of his will ; but, you must fear,
 His greatness weighed, his will is not his own ;
 For he himself is subject to his birth.
 He may not, as unvalued persons do,
 Carve for himself ; for on his choice depends
 The safety and health of the whole state ;⁴
 And therefore must his choice be circumscribed

¹ This is the reading of the quarto copy. The folio has :—

“ ——— sweet, not lasting,
 The suppliance of a minute.”

“The *suppliance* of a minute” should seem to mean, *supplying* or *enduring* only that short space of time ; as transitory and evanescent.

² i. e. sinews and muscular strength.

³ *Cautel* is cautious circumspection, subtlety, or deceit. Minsheu explains it, “A crafty way to deceive.”

⁴ “The safety and health of the whole state.” Thus the quarto of 1604. In the folio, it is altered to “The *sanctity*,” &c., supposing the metre defective. But *safety* is used as a trisyllable by Spenser and others.

Unto the voice and yielding of that body,
 Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,
 It fits your wisdom so far to believe it,
 As he in his particular act and place
 May give his saying deed; which is no further,
 Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
 Then weigh what loss your honor may sustain,
 If with too credent ear you list¹ his songs;
 Or lose your heart; or your chaste treasure open
 To his unmastered² importunity.
 Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister;
 And keep you in the rear of your affection,
 Out of the shot and danger of desire.
 The chariest³ maid is prodigal enough,
 If she unmask her beauty to the moon.
 Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes;
 The canker galls the infants of the spring,
 Too oft before their buttons be disclosed;
 And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
 Contagious blastments are most imminent.
 Be wary, then; best safety lies in fear;
 Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

Oph. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
 As watchman to my heart; but, good my brother,
 Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
 Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
 Whilst, like a puffed and reckless libertine,
 Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
 And recks not his own read.⁴

Laer. O, fear me not.
 I stay too long;—but here my father comes.

Enter POLONIUS.

A double blessing is a double grace;
 Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

¹ "If with too credulous ear you listen to his songs."

² Licentious.

³ i. e. the most cautious, the most discreet.

⁴ i. e. regards not his own lesson. In *The Two Angry Women of Abingdon*, 1599, we have:—"Take heed, is a good read."

Pol. Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame;
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are staid for. There,—my blessing with you;
[*Laying his hand on LAERTES' head.*

And these few precepts in thy memory
Look thou character.¹ Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel;²
But do not dull thy palm³ with entertainment
Of each new-hatched, unfledged comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but, being in,
Bear it that the opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure,⁴ but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not expressed in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man;
And they in France, of the best rank and station,
Are most select and generous, chief⁵ in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend;
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.⁶
This above all,—to thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,

¹ i. e. mark, imprint, strongly infix.

² The old copies read, "with *hoops* of steel."

³ This figurative expression means, "do not *blunt* thy feeling by taking every new acquaintance by the hand."

⁴ i. e. judgment, opinion.

⁵ The quarto of 1603 reads:—

"Are of a most select and *generall* chief in *this*."

The folio:—

"Are of a most select and *generous cheff*, in that."

The other quartos give the line:—

"*As* of a most select and generous, cheefe in that."

"*Or* of a most select and generous, cheefe in that."

The simple emendation by omitting of *a*, and the proper punctuation of the line, make all clear. "The nobility of France are most select and *high-minded* (generous) *chiefly* in that;" *chief* being an adjective, used adverbially.

⁶ i. e. thrift, economical prudence.

Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell; my blessing season¹ this in thee!

Laer. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

Pol. The time invites you; go, your servants tend.²

Laer. Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well
What I have said to you.

Oph. 'Tis in my memory locked,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

Laer. Farewell.

[*Exit* LAERTES.]

Pol. What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

Oph. So please you, something touching the lord
Hamlet.

Pol. Marry, well bethought.

'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you; and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous.
If it be so, (as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution,) I must tell you,
You do not understand yourself so clearly,
As it behoves my daughter, and your honor.
What is between you? Give me up the truth.

Oph. He hath, my lord, of late, made many tenders
Of his affection to me.

Pol. Affection? puh! you speak like a green girl,
Unsifted³ in such perilous circumstance.
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

Oph. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

Pol. Marry, I'll teach you. Think yourself a baby;
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;
Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Wrangling it thus) you'll tender me a fool.⁴

Oph. My lord, he hath impórtuned me with love,
In honorable fashion.

Pol. Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

¹ "To season, to temper wisely, to make more pleasant and acceptable."—*Baret*.

² Wait.

³ i. e. *untried, unexperienced*.

⁴ Shakspeare makes Polonius play on the equivocal use of the word *tender*, which was anciently used in the sense of *regard* or *respect*, as well as in that of *offer*. The folio reads, "roaming it thus;" and the quarto, "wrong it thus."

Oph. And hath given countenance to his speech,
my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

Pol. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks.¹ I do
know,

When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows.² These blazes, daughter,
Giving more light than heat,—extinct in both,
Even in their promise, as it is a making,—
You must not take for fire. From this time,
Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence;
Set your entreatments³ at a higher rate,
Than a command to parley. For lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him, that he is young;
And with a larger tether may he walk,
Than may be given you. In few, Ophelia,
Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers,⁴
Not of that die which their investments show,
But mere implorators of unholy suits,
Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,
The better to beguile. This is for all;—
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
Have you so slander any moment's leisure,
As to give words or talk with the lord Hamlet.
Look to't, I charge you; come your ways.

Oph. I shall obey, my lord. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV. *The Platform.*

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.

Ham. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

¹ This was a proverbial phrase. There is a collection of epigrams under that title; the woodcock being accounted a witless bird, from a vulgar notion that it had no brains. "Springes to catch woodcocks," means "arts to intrap simplicity."

² "How prodigal the *tongue* lends the *heart* vows," 4to. 1603.

³ i. e. "be more difficult of access; and let the *suits* to you, for that purpose, be of higher respect than a command to parley."

⁴ i. e. panders. *Brokage*, and *to broke*, was anciently to deal in business of an amatory nature by procurement.

Hor. It is a nipping and an eager¹ air.

Ham. What hour now?

Hor. I think it lacks of twelve.

Mar. No, it is struck.

Hor. Indeed? I heard it not; it then draws near the season,

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

[*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off, within.*]

What does this mean, my lord?

Ham. The king doth wake to-night, and takes his rouse,

Keeps wassail,² and the swaggering upspring³ reels;
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

Hor. Is it a custom?

Ham. Ay, marry, is't.

But to my mind,—though I am native here,
And to the manner born,—it is a custom
More honored in the breach, than the observance.
This heavy-headed revel, east and west,⁴
Makes us traduced, and taxed of other nations.
They clepe⁵ us drunkards, and with swinish phrase
Soil our addition;⁶ and indeed it takes
From our achievements, though performed at height,
The pith and marrow of our attribute.
So, oft it chanceth in particular men,
That, for some vicious mole⁷ of nature in them,
As, in their birth, (wherein they are not guilty,

¹ *Eager* was used in the sense of the French *aigre*, sharp.

² To keep *wassail* was to devote the time to festivity.

³ *Upspring* here appears to mean nothing more than *upstart*. Steevens, from a passage in Chapman's *Alphonsus*, thought that it might mean a *dance*.

⁴ This and the following twenty-one lines are omitted in the folio. They had probably been omitted in representation, lest they should give offence to Anne of Denmark.

⁵ *Clepe*, call, clypian (Sax.). The Danes were, indeed, proverbial as drunkards; and well they might be, according to the accounts of the time.

⁶ i. e. characterize us by a swinish epithet.

⁷ i. e. spot, blemish.

Since nature cannot choose his origin,)
 By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,¹
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason ;
Or by some habit, that too much o'erleavens
The form of plausible manners ;—that these men,—
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect ;
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,²—
Their virtues else (be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo)
Shall in the general censure³ take corruption
From that particular fault. The dram of bale
Doth all the noble substance often doubt⁴
To his own scandal.

Enter Ghost.

Hor. Look, my lord, it comes !

Ham. Angels and ministers of grace, defend us !
 Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damned,
 Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,
 Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,
 Thou com'st in such a questionable⁵ shape,

¹ *Complexion* for humor.

² i. e. the influence of the planet supposed to govern our birth, &c.

³ i. e. judgment, opinion.

⁴ The last paragraph of this speech stands in the quarto editions thus:—

“ ————— the dram of *eale*
 Doth all the noble substance of a *doubt*
 To his own scandal.”

Steevens reads:—

“ ————— The dram of *base*
 Doth all the noble substance often *dout* [i. e. do out]
 To his own scandal.”

Malone proposed:—

“ ————— The dram of *base*
 Doth all the noble substance of *worth dout*
 To his own scandal.”

There seems to be no reason why *dout* should be substituted for *doubt*. Mr. Boswell has justly observed, that *to doubt* may mean to bring into doubt or suspicion ; many words similarly formed are used by Shakspeare and his contemporaries. We have ventured to read *bale* (i. e. evil) instead of *base*, as nearer to the reading of the first edition.

⁵ *Questionable* must not be understood in its present acceptation of doubtful, but as *conversable*, inviting question.

That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee, Hamlet,
 King, father, royal Dane. O, answer me.
 Let me not burst in ignorance ! but tell,
 Why thy canónized bones, hearsed in death,
 Have burst their cerements ! why the sepulchre,
 Wherein we saw thee quietly inurned,¹
 Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws,
 To cast thee up again ! What may this mean,
 That thou, dead corse, again, in cômplete steel,²
 Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
 Making night hideous ; and we fools of nature,
 So horridly to shake our disposition,³
 With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls ?
 Say, why is this ? wherefore ? what should we do ?

Hor. It beckons you to go away with it,
 As if it some impartment did desire
 To you alone.

Mar. Look, with what courteous action
 It waves you to a more removed ground !
 But do not go with it.

Hor. No, by no means.

Ham. It will not speak ; then I will follow it.

Hor. Do not, my lord.

Ham. Why, what should be the fear ?
 I do not set my life at a pin's fee ;
 And, for my soul, what can it do to that,
 Being a thing immortal as itself ?
 It waves me forth again ;—I'll follow it.

Hor. What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
 Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff,
 That beetles⁴ o'er his base into the sea ?
 And there assume some other horrible form,
 Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason,⁵
 And draw you into madness ? Think of it.

¹ Quarto 1603—*interred*.

² It appears, from Olaus Wormius, cap. vii., that it was the custom to bury the Danish kings in their armor.

³ Frame of mind.

⁴ i. e. overhangs his base.

⁵ "To deprive your *sovereignty* of reason," signifies to take from you or dispossess you of the *command* of reason.

The very place puts toys¹ of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain,
That looks so many fathoms to the sea,
And hears it roar beneath.

Ham. It waves me still.

Go on, I'll follow thee.

Mar. You shall not go, my lord.

Ham. Hold off your hands.

Hor. Be ruled; you shall not go.

Ham. My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.—

[*Ghost beckons.*
Still am I called;—unhand me, gentlemen;—

[*Breaking from them.*
By Heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets² me:
I say, away;—go on, I'll follow thee.

[*Exeunt Ghost and HAMLET.*

Hor. He waxes desperate with imagination.

Mar. Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

Hor. Have after.—To what issue will this come?

Mar. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

Hor. Heaven will direct it.

Mar. Nay, let's follow him.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *A more remote Part of the Platform.*

Enter Ghost and HAMLET.

Ham. Whither wilt thou lead me? speak, I'll go no further.

Ghost. Mark me.

Ham. I will.

Ghost. My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

¹ i. e. whims.

² To let, in old language, is to hinder, to stay, to obstruct.

Ham. Alas, poor ghost!

Ghost. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

Ham. Speak ; I am bound to hear.

Ghost. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

Ham. What ?

Ghost. I am thy father's spirit ;
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night ;
And, for the day, confined to fast in fires,¹
Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature,
Are burned and purged away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul ; freeze thy young blood ;
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres ;
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.²
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood.—List, list, O, list !—
If thou didst ever thy dear father love,——

Ham. O Heaven !

Ghost. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

Ham. Murder ?

Ghost. Murder most foul, as in the best it is ;
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

Ham. Haste me to know it ; that I, with wings as
swift

As meditation, or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.

Ghost. I find thee apt ;
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,³

¹ The first quarto reads :—

“ Confined in *flaming* fire.”

² Vide note on The Comedy of Errors, Act iii. Sc. 2. It is *porpentine* in the old editions in every instance. *Fretful* is the reading of the folio; the quartos read *fearful*.

³ The folio reads *rots* itself, &c. In the Humorous Lieutenant, by Beaumont and Fletcher, we have :—

“ This *dull* root plucked from Lethe's flood.”

Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear.
'Tis given out, that, sleeping in mine orchard,
A serpent stung me ; so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abused. But know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life,¹
Now wears his crown.

Ham. O my prophetic soul ! my uncle !

Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,
(O wicked wit, and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce !) won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming virtuous queen.
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there !
From me, whose love was of that dignity,
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage ; and to decline
Upon a wretch, whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine !

But virtue, as it never will be moved,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven ;
So lust, though to a radiant angel linked,
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
And prey on garbage.

But soft ! methinks I scent the morning air ;
Brief let me be.—Sleeping within mine orchard,
My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure² hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebenon³ in a vial,
And in the porches of mine ears did pour
The leperous distilment ; whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man,
That, swift as quicksilver, it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body ;
And with a sudden vigor, it doth posset

¹ Quarto, 1603—*heart*.

² This is also a Latinism ; *securus*, *quiet*, or *unguarded*.

³ *Hebenon* may probably be derived from *henbane*, the oil of which, according to Pliny, dropped into the ears, disturbs the brain ; and there is sufficient evidence that it was held poisonous by our ancestors.

And curd, like eager¹ droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine,
And a most instant tetter barked about,
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
All my smooth body.

Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand,
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once despatched;²
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhouseled,³ disappointed,⁴ unaneled;⁵
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.
O horrible! O horrible! most horrible!
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.
But, howsoever thou pursu'st this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught; leave her to Heaven,
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!
The glowworm shows the matin to be near,
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire;⁶
Adieu, adieu, adieu! remember me. [Exit.]

Ham. O all you host of heaven! O earth! What
else?

And shall I couple hell?—O fie!—Hold, hold, my
heart;

And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up!—Remember thee?
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe.⁷ Remember thee?
Yea, from the tables of my memory

¹ In Sc. iv. we have *eager* air for sharp, biting air. "*Eger* (says Baret), *sower, sharp*; acidus, aigre."

² Quarto 1603, *deprived*. To *despatch* and to *rid* were synonymous.

³ *Unhouseled* is without having received the sacrament.

⁴ *Disappointed* is the same as *unappointed*, and may be explained *unprepared*.

⁵ *Unaneled* is without extreme unction.

⁶ *Uneffectual*, i. e. shining without heat. The use of *to pale*, as a verb, is rather unusual, but not peculiar to Shakespeare.

⁷ i. e. in this *head* confused with thought.

I'll wipe away all trivial, fond records,
 All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
 That youth and observation copied there ;
 And thy commandment all alone shall live
 Within the book and volume of my brain,
 Unmixed with baser matter. Yes, by Heaven !
 O most pernicious woman !
 O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain !
 My tables,—meet it is, I set it down,
 That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain ;
 At least, I am sure it may be so in Denmark.

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word ;¹
 It is, *Adieu, adieu ! remember me.*
 I have sworn't.

Hor. [*Within.*] My lord, my lord,—

Mar. [*Within.*] Lord Hamlet,—

Hor. [*Within.*] Heaven secure him !

Ham. So be it !

Mar. [*Within.*] Illo, ho, ho, my lord !

Ham. Hillo, ho, ho, boy ! come, bird, come.²

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Mar. How is't, my noble lord ?

Hor. What news, my lord ?

Ham. O wonderful !

Hor. Good my lord, tell it.

Ham. No ;

You will reveal it.

Hor. Not I, my lord, by Heaven.

Mar. Nor I, my lord.

¹ The quarto 1603 has—"Now to the words." By "Now to my word," Hamlet means now to my motto, my word of remembrance. Steevens asserted that the allusion is to the military watchword. A word, mot, or motto, was any short sentence, such as is inscribed on a token, or under a device or coat of arms. It was a common phrase. See Ben Jonson's Works, by Mr. Gifford, vol. ii. p. 102.

² This is the call which falconers use to their hawk in the air when they would have him come down to them.

Ham. How say you, then; would heart of man
once think it?

But you'll be secret,——

Hor. Mar. Ay, by Heaven, my lord.

Ham. There's ne'er a villain, dwelling in all Den-
mark,

But he's an arrant knave.

Hor. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the
grave,

To tell us this.

Ham. Why, right; you are in the right;
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit, that we shake hands, and part;
You, as your business, and desire, shall point you;—
For every man hath business, and desire,
Such as it is,—and, for my own poor part,
Look you, I will go pray.

Hor. These are but wild and whirling words, my
lord.

Ham. I am sorry they offend you, heartily; yes,
'Faith, heartily.

Hor. There's no offence, my lord.

Ham. Yes, by saint Patrick,¹ but there is, Horatio,
And much offence too. Touching this vision here,
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you.
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'ermaster it as you may. And now, good friends,
As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.

Hor. What is't, my lord?
We will.

Ham. Never make known what you have seen
to-night.

Hor. Mar. My lord, we will not.

Ham. Nay, but swear't.

¹ Warburton has ingeniously defended Shakspeare for making the Danish prince swear by *St. Patrick*, by observing, that the whole northern world had their learning from Ireland. It is, however, more probable that the Poet seized the first popular imprecation that came to his mind, without regarding whether it suited the country or character of the person to whom he gave it.

Hor. In faith,
My lord, not I.

Mar. Nor I, my lord, in faith.

Ham. Upon my sword.

Mar. We have sworn, my lord, already.

Ham. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

Ham. Ha, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there,
true-penny?

Come on,—you hear this fellow in the cellarage,—
Consent to swear.

Hor. Propose the oath, my lord.

Ham. Never to speak of this that you have seen,
Swear by my sword.¹

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

Ham. *Hic et ubique!* then we'll shift our ground.—
Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword.
Swear by my sword,

Never to speak of this that you have heard.

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear by his sword.

Ham. Well said, old mole! Canst work i' the earth
so fast?

A worthy pioneer!—Once more remove, good friends.

Hor. O day and night,—but this is wondrous
strange!

Ham. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
But come;—

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy!

How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,

As I, perchance, hereafter shall think meet

To put an antic disposition on,—

That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,

With arms encumbered thus, or this head-shake,

Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,

¹ The custom of swearing by the sword, or rather by the cross at the upper end of it, is very ancient. The name of Jesus was not unfrequently inscribed on the handle.

As, *Well, well, we know*;—or, *We could, an if we would*;—or, *If we list to speak*;—or, *There be, an if they might*;—

Or such ambiguous giving out, to note
That you know aught of me.—This not to do, swear;¹
So grace and mercy at your most need help you!

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

Ham. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! So, gentlemen,
With all my love I do commend me to you;
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
May do, to express his love and friending to you,
God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
The time is out of joint;—O cursed spite!
That ever I was born to set it right!
Nay, come, let's go together.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A Room in Polonius's House.*

Enter POLONIUS *and* REYNALDO.

Pol. Give him this money, and these notes, Reynaldo.

Rey. I will, my lord.

Pol. You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,
Before you visit him, to make inquiry
Of his behavior.

Rey. My lord, I did intend it.

Pol. Marry, well said; very well said. Look you,
sir,
Inquire me first what *Danskers*² are in Paris;

¹ The quarto 1604 reads, "this do swear." The sense is sufficiently obvious without explanation.

² i. e. *Danes*. Warner, in his *Albion's England*, calls Denmark *Danish*.

And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,
 What company, at what expense ; and finding, &c.
 By this encompassment, and drift of question,
 That they do know my son, come you more nearer
 Than your particular demands will touch it.
 Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him ;
 As thus,—*I know his father, and his friends,*
And, in part, him.—Do you mark this, Reynaldo ?

Rey. Ay, very well, my lord.

Pol. *And, in part, him ;—but, you may say, not well ;*

But, if't be he I mean, he's very wild ;
Addicted so and so ;—and there put on him
What forgeries you please ; marry, none so rank
As may dishonor him ; take heed of that ;
But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips,
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.

Rey. As gaming, my lord.

Pol. Ay, or 'drinking, fencing,¹ swearing, quarrelling,

Drabbing ;—you may go so far.

Rey. My lord, that would dishonor him.

Pol. 'Faith, no ; as you may season it in the charge.

You must not put another scandal on him,

That he is open to incontinency ;

That's not my meaning. But breathe his faults so quaintly,

That they may seem the taints of liberty ;

The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind ;

A savageness² in unreclaimed blood,

Of general assault.

Rey. But, my good lord,—

Pol. Wherefore should you do this ?

Rey. Ay, my lord,

I would know that.

¹ "The cunning of fencers is now applied to quarrelling ; they think themselves no men, if for stirring of a quarrel, they prove not their valure upon some bodies fleshe."—*Gosson's Schole of Abuse*, 1579.

² "A wildness of untamed blood, such as youth is generally assailed

Pol. Marry, sir, here's my drift ;
 And, I believe, it is a fetch of warrant.
 You laying these slight sullies on my son,
 As 'twere a thing a little soiled i' the working,
 Mark you,
 Your party in converse, him you would sound,
 Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes,
 The youth you breathe of, guilty, be assured,
 He closes with you in this consequence ;
Good sir, or so ;¹ or *friend*, or *gentleman*,—
 According to the phrase, or the addition,
 Of man and country.

Rey. Very good, my lord.

Pol. And then, sir, does he this,—He does—
 What was I about to say ?—By the mass, I was about
 to say something.—Where did I leave ?

Rey. At, closes in the consequence.

Pol. At, closes in the consequence,—*Ay, marry ;*
 He closes with you thus :—*I know the gentleman ;*
I saw him yesterday, or t'other day,
Or then, or then ; with such, or such ; and, as you say,
There was he gaming ; there o'ertook in his rouse ;
There falling out at tennis ; or, perchance,
I saw him enter such a house of sale,
(Videlicet, a brothel,) or so forth.

See you now ;
 Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth ;
 And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
 With windlaces, and with assays of bias,²
 By indirections find directions out ;
 So, by my former lecture and advice,
 Shall you my son. You have me, have you not ?

Rey. My lord, I have.

Pol. God be wi' you ; fare you well.

Rey. Good my lord,—

Pol. Observe his inclination in yourself.³

¹ So, for *so forth*, as in the last act :—"Six French rapiers and poniards with their assigns, as girdle, hanger, and so."

² i. e. by *tortuous devices* and *side essays*.

³ i. e. in your own person ; personally add your own observations of his conduct to these inquiries respecting him.

Rey. I shall, my lord.

Pol. And let him ply his music.

Rey. Well, my lord.

[*Exit.*]

Enter OPHELIA.

Pol. Farewell!—How now, Ophelia? what's the matter?

Oph. O my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

Pol. With what, in the name of Heaven?

Oph. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet,—with his doublet all unbraced;
No hat upon his head; his stockings fouled,
Untartered and down-gyved¹ to his ankle;
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
And with a look so piteous in purport,
As if he had been loosed out of hell,
To speak of horrors,—he comes before me.

Pol. Mad for thy love?

Oph. My lord, I do not know;

But, truly, I do fear it.

Pol. What said he?

Oph. He took me by the wrist, and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face,
As he would draw it. Long staid he so;
At last,—a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,—
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound,
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk,²
And end his being. That done, he lets me go;
And, with his head over his shoulder turned,
He seemed to find his way without his eyes;
For out o' doors he went without their help,
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

¹ Hanging down like the loose cincture which confines the fetters or girdles round the ankles.

² i. e. his breast. "The bulke or breast of a man; thorax, la poitrine."—*Bard.*

Since not¹ the exterior nor the inward man
 Resembles that it was. What it should be,
 More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
 So much from the understanding of himself,
 I cannot dream² of. I entreat you both,
 That,—being of so young days brought up with him;
 And, since, so neighbored to his youth and humor,³—
 That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
 Some little time; so by your companies
 To draw him on to pleasures; and to gather,
 So much as from occasion you may glean,
 Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,⁴
 That, opened, lies within our remedy.

Queen. Good gentlemen, he hath much talked of
 you;

~~And~~ I am, two men there are not living,
~~From~~ whom he more adheres. If it will please you
~~To~~ show us so much gentry⁵ and good will,
 As to expend your time with us awhile,
 For the supply and profit of our hope,⁶
 Your visitation shall receive such thanks
 As fits a king's remembrance.

Ros. Both your majesties
 Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,⁷
 Put your dread pleasures more into command
 Than to entreaty.

Guil. But⁸ we both obey,
 And here give up ourselves, in the full bent,⁹
 To lay our service freely at your feet,
 To be commanded.

King. Thanks, Rosencrantz, and gentle Guilden-
 stern.

Queen. Thanks, Guildenstern, and gentle Rosen-
 crantz;

¹ Quarto—*with nor*.

² Folio—*deem*.

³ Quarto—*havior*.

⁴ This line is omitted in the folio.

⁵ *Gentry* for *gentle courtesy*. "Gentlemanliness or *gentry*, kindness,
 or natural goodness; *generositas*."—*Baret*.

⁶ *Supply* and *profit* is *aid* and *advantage*.

⁷ i. e. *over us*.

⁸ Folio omits *but*.

⁹ i. e. to the utmost of inclination or disposition.

And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son.—Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

Guil. Heavens make our presence, and our practices,
Pleasant and helpful to him!

Queen.

Ay, Amen!

[*Exeunt* ROS., GUIL., and some Attendants.]

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,
Are joyfully returned.

King. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

Pol. Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege,
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God, and to my gracious king;
And I do think (or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail¹ of policy so sure
As it hath² used to do) that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

King. O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.

Pol. Give first admittance to the ambassadors;
My news shall be the fruit³ to that great feast.

King. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

He tells me, my dear Gertude, he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

Queen. I doubt it is no other but the main;
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

Re-enter POLONIUS, with VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.

King. Well, we shall sift him.—Welcome, my good
friends!

Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

Vol. Most fair return of greetings and desires.
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress

¹ i. e. the trace or track.

² Folio—as I have.

³ Folio—news. By fruit, *dessert* is meant.

His nephew's levies ; which to him appeared
 To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack ;
 But, better looked into, he truly found
 It was against your highness ; whereat grieved—
 That so his sickness, age, and impotence,
 Was falsely borne in hand,¹—sends out arrests
 On Fortinbras ; which he, in brief, obeys ;
 Receives rebuke from Norway ; and, in fine,
 Makes vow before his uncle, never more
 To give the assay of arms against your majesty.
 Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
 Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee ;²
 And his commission, to employ those soldiers,
 So levied as before, against the Polack ;
 With an entreaty, herein further shown,

[*Gives a paper.*

That it might please you to give quiet pass
 Through your dominions for this enterprise ;
 On such regards of safety, and allowance,
 As therein are set down.

King.

It likes us well ;

And, at our more considered time, we'll read,
 Answer, and think upon this business.
 Mean time, we thank you for your well-took labor.
 Go to your rest ; at night we'll feast together ;
 Most welcome home !

[*Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.*

Pol.

This business is well ended.

My liege, and madam, to expostulate³
 What majesty should be, what duty is,
 Why day is day, night, night, and time is time,
 Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
 Therefore,—since brevity is the soul of wit,
 And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,—
 I will be brief. Your noble son is mad.

¹ i. e. deluded, deceived by false appearances.

² That is, a *feud* or *fee* in land of that annual value. The quartos read *threescore* thousand.

³ i. e. to inquire. The idea of dotage encroaching upon wisdom, will solve all the phenomena of the character of Polonius.

Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,
What is't, but to be nothing else but mad?
But let that go.

Queen. More matter, with less art.

Pol. Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
That he is mad, 'tis true; 'tis true, 'tis pity;
And pity 'tis, 'tis true: a foolish figure;
But farewell it, for I will use no art.
Mad let us grant him, then; and now remains,
That we find out the cause of this effect;
Or, rather say, the cause of this defect;
For this effect, defective, comes by cause.
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
Perpend.

I have a daughter; have, while she is mine;
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this. Now gather and surmise. •

*To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beauti-
fied Ophelia,——*

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; *beautified* is a vile
phrase; but you shall hear.—Thus:—

*In her excellent white bosom, these, &c.*¹

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her?

Pol. Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful.—

*Doubt thou the stars are fire; [Reads.
Doubt, that the sun doth move;
Doubt truth to be a liar;
But never doubt I love.*

*O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have
not art to reckon my groans; but that I love thee best,
O most best, believe it. Adieu.*

*Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this
machine is to him, Hamlet.*

¹ Formerly the word *these* was usually added at the end of the super-
scription of letters. The folio reads:—" *These* in her excellent white
bosom these."

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me ;
And more above, hath his solicitings,
As they fell out by time, by means, and place,
All given to mine ear.

King. But how hath she
Received his love ?

Pol. What do you think of me ?

King. As of a man faithful and honorable.

Pol. I would fain prove so. But what might you
think,

When I had seen this hot love on the wing,
(As I perceived it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me,) what might you,
Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,
If I had played the desk or table-book ;
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb ;¹
Or looked upon this love with idle sight ;
What might you think ? No, I went round² to work,
And my young mistress thus did I bespeak :—

*Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy star ;*³

This must not be ; and then I precepts gave her,
That she should lock herself from his resort,
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.

Which done, she took the fruits of my advice ;

And he, repulsed, (a short tale to make,)

Fell into a sadness ; then into a fast ;

Thence to a watch ; thence into a weakness ;

Thence to a lightness ; and, by this declension,

Into the madness wherein now he raves,

And all we mourn for.

King. Do you think 'tis this ?

Queen. It may be, very likely.

Pol. Hath there been such a time, (I'd fain know
that,)

¹ That is, "If I had acted the part of *depository* of their secret loves, or given my heart a *hint* to be mute about their passion." The quartos read—"given my heart a *working*," and the modern editors follow this reading.

² Plainly, roundly, without reserve.

³ This was changed to *sphere* in the 4to. 1632, and that reading is followed by the modern editions. "Out of thy *star*," is placed above thee by *destiny*.

That I have positively said, 'Tis so,
When it proved otherwise?

King. Not that I know.

Pol. Take this from this, if this be otherwise.

[*Pointing to his head and shoulder.*]

If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre.

King. How may we try it further?

Pol. You know sometimes he walks four hours together,
Here in the lobby.

Queen. So he does, indeed.

Pol. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him.
Be you and I behind an arras then;
Mark the encounter: if he love her not,
And be not from his reason fallen thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm, and carters.

King. We will try it.

Enter HAMLET, reading.

Queen. But, look, where sadly the poor wretch
comes reading.

Pol. Away, I do beseech you, both away;
I'll board¹ him presently.—O, give me leave.—

[*Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants.*]

How does my good lord Hamlet?

Ham. Well, god-'a-mercy.

Pol. Do you know me, my lord?

Ham. Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

Pol. Not I, my lord.

Ham. Then I would you were so honest a man.

Pol. Honest, my lord?

Ham. Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is
to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

Pol. That's very true, my lord.

¹ i. e. accost, address him.

Ham. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god, kissing carrion,¹—Have you a daughter?

Pol. I have, my lord.

Ham. Let her not walk i' the sun. Conception is a blessing; but as your daughter may conceive,—friend, look to't.

Pol. How say you by that? [*Aside.*] Still harping on my daughter:—yet he knew me not at first; he said I was a fishmonger. He is far gone, far gone; and, truly, in my youth I suffered much extremity for love; very near this. I'll speak to him again.—What do you read, my lord?

Ham. Words, words, words.

Pol. What is the matter, my lord?

Ham. Between who?

Pol. I mean the matter that you read, my lord.

Ham. Slanders, sir; for the satirical rogue says here, that old men have gray beards; that their faces are wrinkled; their eyes purging thick amber, and plum-tree gum; and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams. All of which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for yourself, sir, should be as old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

Pol. Though this be madness, yet there's method in it. [*Aside.*] Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

Ham. Into my grave?

Pol. Indeed, that is out o' the air.—How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him.

¹ The old copies read—"being ~~good~~ kissing carrion." The emendation is Warburton's. The same kind of expression occurs in *Cymbeline*:—"Common-kissing Titan." And Malone has adduced the following passage from the play of King Edward III., 1596, which Shakspeare had certainly seen:—

"The freshest *summer's day* doth soonest *taint*
The loathed *carrion* that it seems to *kiss*."

and my daughter.—My honorable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.¹

Ham. You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal; except my life, except my life, except my life.

Pol. Fare you well, my lord.

Ham. These tedious old fools!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Pol. You go to seek the lord Hamlet; there he is.

Ros. God save you, sir! [*To POLONIUS.*

[*Exit POLONIUS.*

Guil. My honored lord!—

Ros. My most dear lord!—

Ham. My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both?

Ros. As the indifferent children of the earth.

Guil. Happy, in that we are not overhappy;
On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

Ham. Nor the soles of her shoe?

Ros. Neither, my lord.

Ham. Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favors?

Guil. 'Faith, her privates we.

Ham. In the secret parts of fortune? O, most true; she is a strumpet. What news?

Ros. None, my lord; but that the world is grown honest.

Ham. Then is doomsday near. But your news is not true.² [Let me question more in particular. What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

Guil. Prison, my lord!

Ham. Denmark's a prison.

¹ This speech is abridged thus in the quartos:—

“I will leave him and my daughter. My lord,
I will take my leave of you.”

² All within crotchets is wanting in the quarto copies.

Ros. Then is the world one.

Ham. A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons; Denmark being one of the worst.

Ros. We think not so, my lord.

Ham. Why, then 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so; to me it is a prison.

Ros. Why, then your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

Ham. O God! I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

Guil. Which dreams, indeed, are ambition; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

Ham. A dream itself is but a shadow.

Ros. Truly; and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality, that it is but a shadow's shadow.

Ham. Then are our beggars, bodies; and our monarchs, and outstretched heroes, the beggars' shadows.¹ Shall we to the court? for, by my fay,² I cannot reason.

Ros. Guil. We'll wait upon you.

Ham. No such matter; I will not sort you with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended.] But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?³

Ros. To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

Ham. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you; and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear, a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come; deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

Guil. What should we say, my lord?

Ham. Any thing—but to the purpose. You were

¹ "If ambition is such an unsubstantial thing, then are our beggars who at least can dream of greatness the only things of substance, and monarchs and heroes, though appearing to fill such mighty space with their ambition, but the shadows of the beggars' dreams."

² By my faith.

³ What do you at Elsinore?

sent for ; and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to color. I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

Ros. To what end, my lord ?

Ham. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no.

Ros. What say you ?

[*To GUILDENSTERN.*

Ham. Nay, then I have an eye of you ;¹ [*Aside ;*]—if you love me, hold not off.

Guil. My lord, we were sent for.

Ham. I will tell you why ; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late (but wherefore, I know not) lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises ; and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory ; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me, than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is a man ! How noble in reason ! how infinite in faculties ! in form, and moving, how express and admirable ! in action, how like an angel ! in apprehension, how like a god ! the beauty of the world ! the paragon of animals ! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust ? Man delights not me, no, nor woman neither ; though, by your smiling, you seem to say so.

Ros. My lord, there is no such stuff in my thoughts.

Ham. Why did you laugh, then, when I said, *Man delights not me* ?

Ros. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten² entertainment the players shall receive

¹ To have an eye of any one is to have an inkling of his purpose. The first quarto has :—"Nay, then I see how the wind sets."

² See *Twelfth Night*, Act i. Sc. 5.

from you. We coted¹ them on the way; and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

Ham. He that plays the king, shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me: the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target. The lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; [the clown shall make those laugh, whose lungs are tickled o' the sere;²] and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for't.—What players are they?

Ros. Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city.

Ham. How chances it, they travel?³ Their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

Ros. I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

Ham. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so followed?

Ros. No, indeed, they are not.

Ham. How comes it? Do they grow rusty?

Ros. Nay, their endeavor keeps in the wonted pace. But there is, sir, an aiery⁴ of children, little eyases,⁵

¹ To cote is to *pass alongside*, to *pass by*.

² The first quarto reads:—"The clown shall make them laugh that are tickled in the lungs." The same expression occurs in Howard's *Defensive against the Poyson of supposed Prophecies*, 1620, folio:—"Discovering the moods and humors of the vulgar sort to be so loose and *tickle of the seare*."

³ In the first quarto copy this passage stands thus:—

"*Ham.* How comes it that they travel? do they grow restie?"

"*Gül.* No, my lord, their reputation holds as it was wont.

"*Ham.* How then?"

"*Gül.* I' faith, my lord, *novelty* carries it away, for the principal publicke audience that came to them, are turned to private plays, and to the humor of *children*."

By this we may understand what Rosencrantz means in saying "their *inhibition* comes of the late *innovation*," i. e. their prevention or hindrance comes from the late innovation of *companies of juvenile performers*, as the children of the revels, &c.—They have not relaxed in their endeavors to please, but this (brood) aiery of little children are now the fashion, and have so abused the common stages as to deter many from frequenting them.

⁴ i. e. a *brood*.

⁵ i. e. young nestlings; properly young, unfledged hawks.

that cry out on the top of the question,¹ and are most tyrannically clapped for't. These are now the fashion; and so berattle the common stages, (so they call them,) that many, wearing rapiers, are afraid of goose quills, and dare scarce come thither.

Ham. What, are they children? who maintains them? how are they escoted?² Will they pursue the quality,³ no longer than they can sing?⁴ will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players, (as it is most like, if their means are no better,) their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?

Ros. Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin, to tarre⁵ them on to controversy. There was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

Ham. Is it possible?

Guil. O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

Ham. Do the boys carry it away?

Ros. Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.⁶

Ham. It is not very strange; for my uncle is king of Denmark, and those that would make mouths⁷ at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats apiece, for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out. [*Flourish of trumpets within.*]

Guil. There are the players.

¹ *Question* is speech, conversation. The meaning may therefore be, they cry out on the top of their voice.

² i. e. *paid*.

³ i. e. *profession*. Mr. Gifford has remarked, that "this word seems more peculiarly appropriated to the profession of a player by our old writers."

⁴ "*No longer than they can sing*," i. e. no longer than they keep the voices of boys, and sing in the choir.

⁵ i. e. set them on; a phrase borrowed from the setting on a dog.

⁶ i. e. carry all the world before them: there is, perhaps, an allusion to the *Globe* theatre, the sign of which is said to have been Hercules carrying the globe.

⁷ First copy, "mops and moes;" folio, "mowes."

Ham. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands. Come, then; the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony. Let me comply¹ with you in this garb; lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome; but my uncle-father, and aunt-mother, are deceived.

Gul. In what, my dear lord?

Ham. I am but mad north-north-west; when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw.²

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. Well be with you, gentlemen!

Ham. Hark you, Guildenstern;—and you too;—at each ear a hearer. That great baby, you see there, is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.

Ros. Happily, he's the second time come to them; for, they say, an old man is twice a child.

Ham. I will prophesy, he comes to tell me of the players; mark it.—You say right, sir; o' Monday morning; 'twas then, indeed.

Pol. My lord, I have news to tell you.

Ham. My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome,—

Pol. The actors are come hither, my lord.

Ham. Buzz, buzz!

Pol. Upon my honor,—

Ham. *Then came each actor on his ass,*—

Pol. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-

¹ Hamlet has received his old schoolfellows with somewhat of the coldness of suspicion hitherto, but he now remembers that this is not courteous: he therefore rouses himself to give them a proper reception. "Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. *Your hands.* Come, then; the appurtenance of welcome is *fashion and ceremony.* Let me *embrace* you in this *fashion*; lest I should seem to give you a less courteous reception than I give the players, to whom I must behave with at least exterior politeness." To *comply with* was to *embrace*.

² The original form of this proverb was, undoubtedly, "To know a hawk from a *hernshaw*;" that is, to know a hawk from the *heron* which it pursues. The corruption is said to be as old as the time of Shakspeare.

pastoral, [tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral,¹] scene individable, or poem unlimited.—Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light for the law of writ² and the liberty. These are the only men.

Ham. *O Jephthah, judge of Israel*,—what a treasure hadst thou!

Pol. What a treasure had he, my lord?

Ham. Why—*One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he loved passing well.*³

Pol. Still on my daughter. [Aside.

Ham. Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

Pol. If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter, that I love passing well.

Ham. Nay, that follows not.

Pol. What follows then, my lord?

Ham. Why, *As by lot, God wot*, and then, you know, *It came to pass, As most like it was*,—The first row of the pious chanson⁴ will show you more; for look, my abridgment⁵ comes.

Enter four or five Players.

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all.—I am glad to see thee well;—welcome, good friends.—O old friend! Why, thy face is valanced⁶ since I saw thee last. Com'st thou to beard me in Denmark?—What!

¹ The words within crotchets are not in the quartos.

² *Writ* for *writing*, a common abbreviation, which is not yet obsolete. The quarto of 1603 reads, "for the law *hath* writ." The modern editions have pointed this passage in the following manner:—"Scene individable, or poem unlimited; Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ, and the liberty, these are the only men."

³ An imperfect copy of this ballad, of "Jephtha, Judge of Israel," was given to Dr. Percy by Steevens. See *Reliques*, ed. 1794, vol. i. p. 189. There is a more correct copy in Mr. Evans's *Old Ballads*, vol. i. p. 7. ed. 1810.

⁴ *Pious chanson* is the reading of the first folio; three of the quartos read *pious*; and the newly-discovered quarto of 1603, "*the godly ballad*;" which puts an end to controversy upon the subject. The *first row* is the first column. Every one is acquainted with the form of these old carols and ballads.

⁵ The folio reads, "abridgments come." My *abridgment*, i. e. who come to abridge my talk.

⁶ i. e. fringed with a beard.

ny young lady and mistress! By-'r-lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven, than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine.¹ 'Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring.²—Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at any thing we see; we'll have a speech straight. Come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

1 *Play.* What speech, my lord?

Ham. I heard thee speak me a speech, once—but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million;³ 'twas caviare to the general;⁴ but it was (as I received it, and others, whose judgments, in such matters, cried in the top of mine) an excellent play; well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember one said there were no sallets in the lines,⁵ to make the matter savory; nor no matter in the phrase, that might indite the author of affection;⁶ but called it, an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved; 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line; let me see, let me see;—

The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,—
'tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus.

¹ A *chopine*, a kind of high shoe, or rather clog, worn by the Spanish and Italian ladies, and adopted at one time as a fashion by the English. *Joriate* describes those worn by the Venetians as some of them "half a yard high."

² The old gold coin was thin, and liable to crack. There was a *ring* or circle on it, within which the sovereign's head, &c. was placed; if the crack extended beyond this ring, it was rendered uncurrent.

³ The quarto of 1603, *vulgar*.

⁴ " 'Twas caviare to the general." *Caviare* is said to be the pickled roes of certain fish of the sturgeon kind, called in Italy *caviare*, and much used there and in other Catholic countries. Great quantities were prepared on the river Volga formerly. As a dish of high seasoning and peculiar flavor, it was not relished by the *many*, i. e. the *general*.

⁵ The force of this phrase will appear from the following passage, cited by Steevens, from A Banquet of Jests, 1665:—"For *junkets*, joci, and for *sallets*, sales."

⁶ i. e. impeach the author with *affectation* in his style.

*The rugged Pyrrhus,—he whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble,
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,—
Hath now this dread and black complexion smeared
With heraldry more dismal ; head to foot
Now he is total gules ;¹ horridly tricked
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons ;
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and a damned light
To their lord's murder. Roasted in wrath, and fire,
And thus o'ersized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks. So proceed you.*

Pol. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken ; with good
accent, and good discretion.

1 Play. *Anon he finds him*

*Striking too short at Greeks ; his antique sword,
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
Repugnant to command. Unequal matched,
Pyrrhus at Priam drives ; in rage, strikes wide ;
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
Stoops to his base ; and with a hideous crash
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear ; for lo ! his sword,
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, seemed i' the air to stick.
So as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood ;
And, like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing.*

*But, as we often see, against some storm,
A silence in the heavens, the rack² stand still,
The bold winds speechless, and the orb below
As hush as death ; anon the dreadful thunder
Doth rend the region ; so, after Pyrrhus' pause,
A roused vengeance sets him new a-work ;
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall*

¹ *Gules*, i. e. *red*, in the language of heraldry. To *trick* is to color.

² The *rack* is the clouds.

*On Mars's armor, forged for proof eterne,
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam.—
Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,
In general synod, take away her power;
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,
As low as to the fiends!*

Pol. This is too long.

Ham. It shall to the barber's, with your beard.—
'Pr'ythee, say on.—He's for a jig,¹ or a tale of bawdry,
or he sleeps.—Say on: come to Hecuba.

1 Play. *But who, ah, woe! had seen the mobled²
queen—*

Ham. The mobled queen?

Pol. That's good; mobled queen is good.

1 Play. *Run barefoot up and down, threatening the
flames*

*With bisson³ rheum; a clout upon that head,
Where late the diadem stood; and, for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up,
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steeped,
'Gainst fortune's state would treason have pronounced.
But if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs;
The instant burst of clamor that she made,
(Unless things mortal move them not at all,)
Would have made milch⁴ the burning eye of heaven,
And passion in the gods.*

¹ *Giga*, in Italian, was a fiddle, or crowd; *gigaro*, a fiddler, or minstrel. Hence a *jig* (first written *gigge*, though pronounced with a *g* soft, after the Italian) was a ballad, or ditty, sung to the fiddle. There are several of the old ballads and dialogues called *jigs* in the Harleian Collection.

² The folio reads *inobled*, an evident error of the press, for *mobled*, which means *muffled*.

³ *Bisson* is blind. *Bisson rheum*, therefore, is *blinding tears*.

⁴ i. e. *mild, tender-hearted*.—TODD.—By a hardy poetical license, this expression means, "Would have filled with tears the burning eye of heaven." To have "made passion in the gods" would have been to move them to compassion.

Pol. Look, whether he has not turned his color, and has tears in's eyes.—'Prythee, no more.

Ham. 'Tis well; I'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon.—Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used; for they are the abstract, and brief chronicles, of the time. After your death you were better have a bad epitaph, than their ill report while you live.

Pol. My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Ham. Odd's bodikin, man, much better. Use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honor and dignity; the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

Pol. Come, sirs.

[*Exit* POLONIUS, with some of the Players.]

Ham. Follow him, friends; we'll hear a play to-morrow.—Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the murder of Gonzago?

1 Play. Ay, my lord.

Ham. We'll have it to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down, and insert in't? could you not?

1 Play. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Very well.—Follow that lord; and look you mock him not. [*Exit* Player.]—My good friends, [*To* Ros. and GUIL.] I'll leave you till night; you are welcome to Elsinore.

Ros. Good my lord!

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

Ham. Ay, so, good bye to you;—now I am alone.
O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous, that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit,
That from her working, all his visage wanned;¹

¹ The folio reads *warmed*, which reading Steevens contended for; but surely no one can doubt, who considers the context, that *wanned* is the Poet's word.

Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing?
For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue¹ for passion,
That I have? He would drown the stage with
tears,

And cleave the general ear with horrid speech;
Make mad the guilty, and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze, indeed,
The very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams,² unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property, and most dear life,
A damned defeat³ was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the
throat,

As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?

Ha!

Why, I should take it; for it cannot be,
But I am pigeon-livered, and lack gall
To make oppression bitter; or, ere this,
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!⁴
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave;

¹ i. e. the *hint* or *prompt word*; the word or sign given by the prompter for a player to enter on his part.

² *John-a-dreams*, or *John-a-droynes*, was a common term for any *dreaming* or *droning simpleton*. *Unpregnant* is not quickened or properly impressed with.

³ *Defeat* here signifies *destruction*. It was frequently used in the sense of *undo* or *take away* by our old writers.

⁴ *Kindless* is unnatural.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *A Room in the Castle.*

Enter King, Queen, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. And can you, by no drift of conference,¹
Get from him why he puts on this confusion ;
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy ?

Ros. He does confess, he feels himself distracted ;
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

Guil. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded ;
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.

Queen. Did he receive you well ?

Ros. Most like a gentleman.

Guil. But with much forcing of his disposition.

Ros. Niggard of question ; but, of our demands,
Most free in his reply.²

Queen. Did you assay him
To any pastime ?

Ros. Madam, it so fell out, that certain players
We o'er-raught³ on the way. Of these we told him ;
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it. They are about the court ;
And, as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.

Pol. 'Tis most true ;
And he beseeched me to entreat your majesties,
To hear and see the matter.

King. With all my heart ; and it doth much content
me

¹ Folio—*circumstance*.

² "Slow to begin *conversation*, but free enough in answering our demands."

³ I. e. reached, overtook.

To hear him so inclined.

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

Ros. We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

King. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither;
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
Affront¹ Ophelia.

Her father and myself (lawful espials²)
Will so bestow ourselves, that, seeing, unseen,
* We may of their encounter frankly judge;
And gather by him, as he is behaved,
If't be the affliction of his love, or no,
That thus he suffers for.

Queen. I shall obey you;
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish,
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness. So shall I hope, your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honors.

Oph. Madam, I wish it may.

[*Exit Queen.*]

Pol. Ophelia, walk you here.—Gracious, so please
you,

We will bestow³ ourselves.—Read on this book;

[*To OPHELIA.*]

That show of such an exercise may color
Your loneliness.⁴—We are oft to blame in this,—
'Tis too much proved,—that with devotion's visage,
And pious action, we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

King. O 'tis too true! how smart
A lash that speech doth give my conscience!
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it,

¹ i. e. meet, encounter her.

² "Lawful espials;" that is, lawful spies.

³ "Bestow ourselves" is here used for *hide* or *place* ourselves.

⁴ Quarto—*loneliness*.

Than is my deed to my most painted word.

O heavy burden !

[*Aside.*

Pol. I hear him coming ; let's withdraw, my lord.

[*Exeunt King and POLONIUS.*

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. To be, or not to be, that is the question :—
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And, by opposing, end them ?—To die,—to sleep,—
No more ;—and, by a sleep, to say we end
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to,—'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die ;—to sleep ;—
To sleep ! perchance to dream ;—ay, there's the rub ;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,¹
Must give us pause. There's the respect,²
That makes calamity of so long life ;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,³
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,⁴
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus⁵ make
With a bare bodkin ?⁶ Who would fardels⁷ bear,
To grunt⁸ and sweat under a weary life ;
But that the dread of something after death,—
The undiscovered country, from whose bourn

¹ "This mortal coil ;" that is, "The tumult and bustle of this life."

² i. e. the *consideration*. This is Shakspeare's most usual sense of the word.

³ *Time*, for *the time*, is a very usual expression with our old writers.

⁴ Folio—"the poor man's contumely."

⁵ The allusion is to the term *quietus est*, used in settling accounts at exchequer audits.

⁶ "*Bodkin* was the ancient term for a small dagger."

⁷ Packs, burdens.

⁸ *To grunt* appears to have conveyed no vulgar or low image to the ear of our ancestors, as many quotations from the old translations of the classics would show.

No traveller returns,—puzzles the will ;
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
 Than fly to others that we know not of ?
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all ;
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought ;
 And enterprises of great pith¹ and moment,
 With this regard, their currents turn awry,²
 And lose the name of action.—Soft you, now !
 The fair Ophelia.—Nymph, in thy orisons
 Be all my sins remembered.

• *Oph.* Good my lord,
 How does your honor for this many a day ?

Ham. I humbly thank you ; well.

Oph. My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
 That I have longed long to re-deliver ;
 I pray you, now receive them.

Ham. No, not I ;

I never gave you aught.

Oph. My honored lord, you know right well, you
 did ;

And, with them, words of so sweet breath composed
 As made the things more rich. Their perfume lost,
 Take these again ; for to the noble mind,
 Rich gifts wax poor, when givers prove unkind.
 There, my lord.

Ham. Ha, ha ! are you honest ?

Oph. My lord ?

Ham. Are you fair ?

Oph. What means your lordship ?

Ham. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty
 should admit no discourse to your beauty.³

Oph. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce
 than with honesty ?

Ham. Ay, truly ; for the power of beauty will sooner

¹ Quartos—*pitch*.

² Folio—*away*.

³ i. e. "your honesty should not admit your beauty to any discourse with her." The first quarto reads, "Your beauty should admit no discourse to your honesty ;" that of 1604, "You should admit no discourse to your beauty."

transform honesty from what it is to a bawd, than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness; this was some time a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

Oph. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock, but we shall relish of it. I loved you not.

Oph. I was the more deceived.

Ham. Get thee to a nunnery; why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were better my mother had not borne me. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offences at my beck, than I have thoughts to put them in,¹ imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven! We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

Oph. At home, my lord.

Ham. Let the doors be shut upon him; that he may play the fool no where² but in's own house. Farewell.

Oph. O, help him, you sweet Heavens!

Ham. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry. Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery; farewell.³ Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough, what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell.

Oph. Heavenly powers, restore him!

Ham. I have heard of your paintings⁴ too, well enough. God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another; you jig, you amble, and you lisp,

¹ "Than I have thoughts to put them in." To put "a thing into thought," is "to think on it."

² Folio—*way*.

³ Folio—*Go*, farewell.

⁴ The folio, for *paintings*, has *prattlings*; and for *face* has *pace*.

and nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance.¹ Go to ; I'll no more of it ; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages : those that are married already, all but one, shall live ; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go. [Exit HAMLET.

Oph. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown !
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword ;
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion, and the mould of form,
The observed of all observers ! quite, quite down !
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That sucked the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune,² and harsh ;
That unmatched form and feature of blown youth,
Blasted with ecstasy.³ O, woe is me !
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see !

Re-enter King and POLONIUS.

King. Love ! his affections do not that way tend ;
Nor what he spake, though it lacked form a little,
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul,
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood ;
And, I do doubt, the hatch, and the disclose,⁴
Will be some danger ; which for to prevent,
I have, in quick determination,
Thus set it down. He shall with speed to England,
For the demand of our neglected tribute.
Haply, the seas, and countries different,
With variable objects, shall expel
This something-settled matter in his heart ;
Whereon his brains still beating, puts him thus
From fashion of himself. What think you on't ?

¹ " You mistake by *wanton* affectation, and pretend to mistake by *ignorance*."

² Quarto—*time*.

³ *Ecstasy* is alienation of the mind. Vide *Tempest*, Act iii. Sc. 3.

⁴ To *disclose* was the ancient term for *hatching* birds of any kind ; from the Fr. *esclos*.

Pol. It shall do well ; but yet, I do believe,
 The origin and commencement of his grief
 Sprung from neglected love.—How now, Ophelia ?
 You need not tell us what lord Hamlet said ;
 We heard it all.—My lord, do as you please ;
 But, if you hold it fit after the play,
 Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
 To show his grief ; let her be round¹ with him ;
 And I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear
 Of all their conference. If she find him not,
 To England send him ; or confine him, where
 Your wisdom best shall think.

King. It shall be so ;
 Madness in great ones must not unwatched go.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *A Hall in the same.*

Enter HAMLET, and certain Players.

Ham. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced
 it to you, trippingly on the tongue ; but if you mouth
 it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town-
 crier spoke my lines.² Nor do not saw the air too
 much with your hand, thus ; but use all gently ; for in
 the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirl-
 wind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a
 temperance, that may give it smoothness. O, it offends
 me to the soul, to hear a robustious periwig-pated fel-
 low tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the
 ears of the groundlings ;³ who, for the most part, are
 capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows, and

¹ See note on Act ii. Sc. 2.

² The first quarto has, "I'd rather hear a town-bull bellow, than such a fellow speak my lines."

³ The first quarto reads, "of the ignorant." Our ancient theatres were far from the commodious, elegant structures which later times have seen. The *pit* was an unfloored space, in the area of the house, sunk considerably beneath the level of the stage ; and it was necessary to elevate the head very much to get a view of the performance. Hence this part of the audience were called *groundlings*.

noise. I would have such a fellow whipped for o'er-doing Termagant;¹ it out-herods Herod. 'Pray you, avoid it.

1 *Play*. I warrant your honor.

Ham. Be not too tame neither; but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature; for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time, his form, and pressure.² Now this, overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of which one, must, in your allowance,³ o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players, that I have seen play,—and heard others praise, and that highly,—not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of Christians, nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bel-lowed, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

1 *Play*. I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us.

Ham. O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns, speak no more than is set down for them; for there be of them, that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though, in the mean time, some necessary ques-tion⁴ of the play be then to be considered. That's

¹ *Termagant* is the name given in old romances to the tempestuous god of the Saracens.

² *Pressure* is impression, resemblance.

³ i. e. approval, estimation.

⁴ The quarto 1603, "*Point* in the play then to be observed." Afterwards is added, "And then you have some again that keeps one suit of jests, as a man is known by one suit of apparel; and gentlemen quotes his jests down in their tables before they come to the play, as thus:—*Cannot you stay till I eat my porridge? and you owe me a quarter's wages; and your beer is sour;* and blabbering with his lips: And thus keeping

villanous ; and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.

[*Exeunt* Players.]

Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

How now, my lord ! will the king hear this piece of work ?

Pol. And the queen too, and that presently.

Ham. Bid the players make haste.—

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

Will you two help to hasten them ?

Both. Ay, my lord.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

Ham. What, ho ; Horatio !

Enter HORATIO.

Hor. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

Ham. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation coped withal.

Hor. O my dear lord,—

Ham. Nay, do not think I flatter ;
For what advancement may I hope from thee,
That no revénue hast, but thy good spirits,
To feed, and clothe thee ? Why should the poor be
flattered ?

No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp ;
And crook the pregnant¹ hinges of the knee,
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear ?
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,
And could of men distinguish her election,
She hath sealed thee for herself. For thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing ;
A man, that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks ; and blessed are those,
Whose blood and judgment are so well co-mingled,²

in his cinque a pace of jests ; when, God knows, the warme Clown cannot
make a jest unless by chance, as the blind man catcheth a hare : Masters,
tell him of it."

¹ *Pregnant*, quick, ready.

² Quarto 1604—"co-medled."

That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
 To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
 That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
 In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
 As I do thee.—Something too much of this.—
 There is a play to-night before the king ;
 One scene of it comes near the circumstance,
 Which I have told thee, of my father's death.
 I pr'ythee, when thou seest that act afoot,
 Even with the very comment of thy soul
 Observe my uncle. If his occulted guilt
 Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
 It is a damned ghost that we have seen ;
 And my imaginations are as foul
 As Vulcan's stithy.¹ Give him heedful note ;
 For I mine eyes will rivet to his face ;²
 And, after, we will both our judgments join
 In censure³ of his seeming.

Hor. Well, my lord ;
 If he steal aught, the whilst this play is playing,
 And scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

Ham. They are coming to the play ; I must be idle :
 Get you a place.

Danish march. A flourish. Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and others.

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet ?

Ham. Excellent, i' faith ; of the chameleon's dish.
 I eat the air, promise-crammed ; you cannot feed
 capons so.

¹ *Vulcan's stithy* is Vulcan's workshop or smithy.

² Here the first quarto has :—

“ And if he do not blench and change at that,
 It is a damned ghost that we have seen ;
 Horatio, have a care, observe him well.

Hor. My lord, mine eyes shall still be on his face,
 And not the smallest alteration
 That shall appear in him, but I shall note it.”

³ i. e. judgment, opinion.

King. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words are not mine.

Ham. No, nor mine now. My lord,—you played once in the university, you say? [*To POLONIUS.*]

Pol. That did I, my lord; and was accounted a good actor.

Ham. And what did you enact?

Pol. I did enact Julius Cæsar. I was killed i' the Capitol; Brutus killed me.¹

Ham. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there.—Be the players ready?

Ros. Ay, my lord; they stay² upon your patience.

Queen. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

Ham. No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

Pol. O ho! do you mark that? [*To the King.*]

Ham. Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

[*Lying down at OPHELIA's feet.*]

Oph. No, my lord.

Ham. I mean my head upon your lap?

Oph. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Do you think I meant contrary³ matters?

Oph. I think nothing, my lord.

Ham. That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

Oph. What is, my lord?

Ham. Nothing.

Oph. You are merry, my lord.

Ham. Who, I?

Oph. Ay, my lord.

Ham. O! your only jig-maker.⁴ What should a man do, but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.

Oph. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

¹ A Latin play, on the subject of Cæsar's death, was performed at Christ's Church, in Oxford, in 1582.

² i. e. "they wait upon your *sufferance* or *will*."

³ This is the reading of the quarto 1603. The quarto 1604, and the folio, read *country*.

⁴ It may here be added that a *jig* sometimes signified a sprightly dance, as at present.

Ham. So long? Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables.¹ O Heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year. But, by'r-lady, he must build churches then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse;² whose epitaph is, *For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.*

Trumpets sound. The Dumb Show³ follows.

Enter a King and a Queen, very lovingly; the Queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck; lays him down upon a bank of flowers; she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts; she seems loath and unwilling awhile; but, in the end, accepts his love. [Exeunt.

Oph. What means this, my lord?

Ham. Marry, this is miching malicho;⁴ it means mischief.

¹ i. e. a dress ornamented with the rich fur of that name, said to be the skin of the sable martin. Hamlet meant to use the word equivocally.

² The *hobby-horse* was driven from his station by the Puritans, as an impious and pagan superstition, but restored after the promulgation of the Book of Sports. The *hobby-horse* was formed of a pasteboard horse's head, and probably a light frame made of wicker work to form the hinder parts; this was fastened round the body of a man, and covered with a footcloth, which nearly reached the ground, and concealed the legs of the performer, who displayed his antic equestrian skill, and performed various juggling tricks, *wigh-hie-ing*, or neighing, to the no small delight of the bystanders. Vide. vol. 2, p. 101.

³ This dumb show appears to be superfluous, and even incongruous; for as the murder is there circumstantially represented, the king ought to have been struck with it then, without waiting for the dialogue.

⁴ *Miching malicho* is lurking mischief, or evil doing. To *mich*, for to

Oph. Belike, this show imports the argument of the play.

Enter Prologue.

Ham. We shall know by this fellow. The players cannot keep counsel ; they'll tell all.

Oph. Will he tell us what this show meant ?

Ham. Ay, or any show that you'll show him. Be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

Oph. You are naught, you are naught ; I'll mark the play.

Pro. *For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.*

Ham. Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring ?

Oph. 'Tis brief, my lord,—

Ham. As woman's love.

Enter a King and a Queen.

P. King. Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart¹ gone round

Neptune's salt wash, and Tellus' orb'd ground ;
And thirty dozen moons, with borrowed sheen,
About the world have times twelve thirties been ;
Since love our hearts, and Hymen did our hands,
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

P. Queen. So many journeys may the sun and moon

Make us again count o'er, ere love be done !

But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,

So far from cheer, and from your former state,

That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,

Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must ;

skulk, to lurk, was an old English verb in common use in Shakspeare's time ; and *malicho* or *malhecho*, *misdeed*, he has borrowed from the Spanish.

¹ *Cart*, car, or chariot, were used indiscriminately for any carriage, formerly.

For women fear too much, even as they love;¹
 And women's fear and love hold quantity;
 In neither aught, or in extremity.
 Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know;
 And as my love is sized, my fear is so.
 Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;
 Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

P. King. 'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and
 shortly too;

My operant² powers their functions leave to do;
 And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
 Honored, beloved; and, happily, one as kind
 For husband shalt thou——

P. Queen. O, confound the rest!

Such love must needs be treason in my breast;
 In second husband let me be accursed!
 None wed the second, but who killed the first.

Ham. That's wormwood.

P. Queen. The instances,³ that second marriage
 move,

Are base respects of thrift, but none of love;
 A second time I kill my husband dead,
 When second husband kisses me in bed.

P. King. I do believe you think what now you speak;
 But, what we do determine oft we break.
 Purpose is but the slave to memory;
 Of violent birth, but poor validity;
 Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree;
 But fall, unshaken, when they mellow be.
 Most necessary 'tis, that we forget
 To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt.
 What to ourselves in passion we propose,
 The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
 The violence of either grief or joy
 Their own enactures⁴ with themselves destroy;

¹ This line is omitted in the folio. There appears to have been a line omitted in the quarto which should have rhymed to this.

² i. e. active.

³ *Instances* are motives. See note on King Richard III. Act iii. Sc. 2.

⁴ i. e. their own *determinations* are revoked in their abatement.

Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament ;
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
This world is not for aye ; nor 'tis not strange,
That even our loves should with our fortunes change :
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark his favorite flies ;
The poor advanced makes friends of enemies.
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend ;
For who not needs, shall never lack a friend ;
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his enemy.
But, orderly to end where I begun,—
Our wills and fates do so contrary run,
That our devices still are overthrown ;
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own.
So think thou wilt no second husband wed ;
But die thy thoughts, when thy first lord is dead.

P. Queen. Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven
light !

Sport and repose lock from me, day and night !
To desperation turn my trust and hope !
An anchor's¹ cheer in prison be my scope !
Each opposite, that blanks the face of joy,
Meet what I would have well, and it destroy !
Both here, and hence, pursue me lasting strife,
If, once a widow, ever I be wife !

Ham. If she should break it now,— [To OPH.]

P. King. 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me
here a while ;

My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep. [Sleeps.]

P. Queen. Sleep rock thy brain ;

And never come mischance between us twain ! [Exit.]

Ham. Madam, how like you this play ?

Queen. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

Ham. O, but she'll keep her word.

King. Have you heard the argument ? Is there no
offence in't ?

¹ *Anchor's for anchoress's.*

Ham. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no offence i' the world.

King. What do you call the play?

Ham. The mouse-trap. Marry, how? Tropically.¹ This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna; Gonzago is the duke's name;² his wife, Baptista; you shall see anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work. But what of that? your majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not. Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.—

Enter LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

Oph. You are as good as a chorus,³ my lord.

Ham. I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

Oph. You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

Ham. It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge.

Oph. Still better, and worse.

Ham. So you mistake⁴ your husbands.—Begin, murderer;—leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come;—

—The croaking raven

Doth bellow for revenge.

Luc. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;

Confederate season, else no creature seeing;

¹ First quarto—*tragicall*. It is evident that a pun was intended.

² "Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, *Baptista*; all the old copies read thus. Yet in the dumb show we have "Enter a *King* and Queen;" and at the end of this speech, "Lucianus, nephew to the King." This seeming inconsistency, however, may be reconciled. Though the interlude is the *image* of the murder of the *duke* of Vienna, or, in other words, founded upon that story, the Poet might make the principal person in *his fable* a *king*. *Baptista* is never used singly by the Italians, being uniformly compounded with *Giam* for *Giovanni*. It is needless to remark that it is always the name of a man.

³ The use to which Shakspeare put the *chorus* may be seen in King Henry V. Every motion or puppet-show was accompanied by an *interpreter* or showman.

⁴ The first quarto—"So you *must take* your husband." Hamlet puns upon the word *mistake*; "So you *mis-take* or *take* your husbands *amiss* for better and worse."

Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
 With Hecat's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
 Thy natural magic and dire property,
 On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[*Pours the poison into the sleeper's ears.*]

Ham. He poisons him i' the garden for his estate.
 His name's Gonzago; the story is extant, and written
 in very choice Italian: you shall see, anon, how the mur-
 derer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

Oph. The king rises.

Ham. What! frightened with false fire!

Queen. How fares my lord?

Pol. Give o'er the play.

King. Give me some light; away!

Pol. Lights, lights, lights!

[*Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO.*]

Ham. Why, let the stricken deer go weep,

The hart ungalled play;

For some must watch, while some must sleep;

Thus runs the world away.—

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers, (if the rest
 of my fortunes turn Turk¹ with me,) with two Provin-
 cial roses on my razed² shoes, get me a fellowship in a
 cry³ of players, sir?

Hor. Half a share.⁴

Ham. A whole one, I.

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,

This realm dismantled was

Of Jove himself; and now reigns here

A very, very—peacock.⁵

¹ To turn Turk was a familiar phrase for any violent change in con-
 dition or character.

² "Provincial roses on my razed shoes." Provincial roses took their
 name from *Provins*, in Lower Brie, and not from *Provence*. Razed shoes
 are most probably embroidered shoes. The quarto reads *raced*. To *race*,
 or *rase*, was to *stripe*.

³ It was usual to call a *pack* of hounds a *cry*; it is here humorously
 applied to a *troop* or *company* of players.

⁴ The players were paid not by salaries, but by *shares* or portions of
 the profit, according to merit.

⁵ "A very, very—peacock." The old copies read *paiock*, and *paiocke*.
 The *peacock* was as proverbially used for a *proud fool* as the *laping* for
 a silly one.

Hor. You might have rhymed.

Ham. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

Hor. Very well, my lord.

Ham. Upon the talk of the poisoning,——

Hor. I did very well note him.

Ham. Ah, ha!—come, some music; come, the recorders.¹—

For if the king like not the comedy,
Why, then, belike,—he likes it not, perdy.²

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Come, some music.

Guil. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Ham. Sir, a whole history.

Guil. The king, sir,——

Ham. Ay, sir, what of him?

Guil. Is, in his retirement, marvellous distempered.

Ham. With drink, sir?

Guil. No, my lord, with choler.

Ham. Your wisdom should show itself more richer, to signify this to the doctor; for, for me to put him to his purgation, would, perhaps, plunge him into more choler.

Guil. Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair.

Ham. I am tame, sir;—pronounce.

Guil. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

Ham. You are welcome.

Guil. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's command-

¹ "The recorders." It is difficult to settle exactly the form of this instrument; old writers, in general, make no distinction between a flute, a pipe, and a recorder; but Hawkins has shown clearly, that the flute and the recorder were distinct instruments.

² *Perdy* is a corruption of the French *par Dieu*.

ment; if not, your pardon, and my return shall be the end of my business.

Ham. Sir, I cannot.

Guil. What, my lord?

Ham. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased. But, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or, rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter. My mother, you say,—

Ros. Then thus she says: Your behavior hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

Ham. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother!—But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart.

Ros. She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

Ham. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

Ros. My lord, you once did love me.

Ham. And do still, by these pickers and stealers.¹

Ros. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? You do, surely, but bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

Ham. Sir, I lack advancement.

Ros. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

Ham. Ay, sir, but *While the grass grows*,—the proverb is something musty.

Enter the Players, with recorders.

O, the recorders;—let me see one.—To withdraw with you.²—Why do you go about to recover the wind of me,³ as if you would drive me into a toil?

¹ By these hands.

² "To withdraw with you." Malone added here a stage direction. [*Taking Guild. aside.*] Steevens thinks it an answer to a motion Guildenstern had used, for Hamlet to withdraw with him. Perhaps it means no more than "to draw back with you," to leave that scent or trail. It is a hunting term, like that which follows.

³ This term is borrowed from hunting, and means, to take advantage of the animal pursued, by getting to the windward of it, that it may not scent its pursuers.

Guil. O my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.¹

Ham. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

Guil. My lord, I cannot.

Ham. I pray you.

Guil. Believe me, I cannot.

Ham. I do beseech you.

Guil. I know no touch of it, my lord.

Ham. 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages² with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look upon, these are the stops.

Guil. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

Ham. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.

Enter POLONIUS.

God bless you, sir!

Pol. My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

Ham. Do you see yonder cloud, that's almost in shape of a camel?

Pol. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

Ham. Methinks it is like a weasel.

¹ Hamlet may say, with propriety, "I do not well understand that." Perhaps Guildenstern means, "If my duty to the king makes me too bold, my love to you makes me importunate even to rudeness."

² The *ventages* are the holes of the pipe. The *stops* means the mode of stopping those ventages to produce notes.

Pol. It is backed like a weasel.

Ham. Or, like a whale?

Pol. Very like a whale.

Ham. Then will I come to my mother by and by.
—They fool me to the top of my bent.¹—I will come
by and by.

Pol. I will say so. [*Exit* POLONIUS.]

Ham. By and by is easily said.—Leave me, friends.

[*Exeunt* ROS., GUIL., HOR., &c.]

'Tis now the very witching time of night;
When church-yards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood,
And do such bitter business as the day²
Would quake to look on. Soft; now to my mother,—
O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom;
Let me be cruel, not unnatural.
I will speak daggers to her, but use none;
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites;
How in my words soever she be shent,³
To give them seals, never, my soul, consent! [*Exit*.]

SCENE III. *A Room in the same.*

Enter King, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. I like him not; nor stands it safe with us,
To let his madness range. Therefore, prepare you;
I your commission will forthwith despatch,
And he to England shall along with you.

¹ As far as the bow will admit of being bent without breaking.

² The quarto reads:—

“And do such business as the bitter day,” &c.

³ To *shend* is to *injure*, whether by reproof, blows, or otherwise. Shakespeare generally uses *shent* for reproof, threatened with angry words. “To give his words *seals*” is therefore to carry his punishment beyond reproof. The allusion is to the sealing a deed to render it effective. The quarto of 1603:—

“I will speak daggers; those sharp words being spent,
To do her wrong my soul shall ne’er consent.”

The terms of our estate may not endure
Hazard so near us, as doth hourly grow
Out of his lunacies.

Guil. We will ourselves provide.

Most holy and religious fear it is,
To keep those many many bodies safe,
That live, and feed, upon your majesty.

Ros. The single and peculiar life is bound,
With all the strength and armor of the mind,
To keep itself from 'noyance; but much more
That spirit, upon whose weal¹ depend and rest
The lives of many. The cease of majesty
Dies not alone; but, like a gulf, doth draw
What's near it, with it. It is a massy wheel,
Fixed on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortised and adjoined; which, when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

King. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;
For we will fetters put upon² this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

Ros. Guil. We will haste us.

[*Exeunt Ros. and Guil.*]

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet.
Behind the arras³ I'll convey myself,
To hear the process; I'll warrant she'll tax him home;
And, as you said,—and wisely was it said,—
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear
The speech, of vantage.⁴ Fare you well, my liege;

¹ Folio reads "spirits."

² Quarto—"about."

³ See King Henry IV. Part I. Act ii. Sc. 4.

⁴ Warburton explains *of vantage*, "by some opportunity of secret observation." Perhaps "*of vantage*," in Shakspeare's language, is *for advantage*, *commodi causa*.

I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know.

King.

Thanks, dear my lord.

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal, eldest curse upon't,
A brother's murder!—Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will;¹
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens,
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy,
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer, but this twofold force,—
To be forestalled, ere we come to fall,
Or pardoned, being down? Then I'll look up;
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder!—
That cannot be; since I am still possessed
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardoned, and retain the offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world,
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;
And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law. But 'tis not so above;
There is no shuffling, there the action lies
In his true nature; and we ourselves compelled,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence. What then? what rests?
Try what repentance can. What can it not?
Yet what can it, when one cannot repent?
O wretched state! O bosom, black as death!
O limed² soul; that, struggling to be free,

¹ i. e. "though I am not only willing, but strongly inclined to pray, my guilt prevents me."

² i. e. caught as with birdlime.

Art more engaged ! Help, angels, make assay !
 Bow, stubborn knees ! and, heart, with strings of steel,
 Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe ;
 All may be well ! *[Retires and kneels.]*

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Now might I do it, pat, now he is praying ;
 And now I'll do 't ; and so he goes to heaven :
 And so am I revenged ? That would be scanned.¹
 A villain kills my father ; and, for that,
 I, his sole son, do this same villain send
 To heaven.

Why, this is hire and salary,² not revenge.
 He took my father grossly, full of bread ;
 With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May ;
 And, how his audit stands, who knows, save Heaven ?
 But, in our circumstance and course of thought,
 'Tis heavy with him. And am I then revenged,
 To take him in the purging of his soul,
 When he is fit and seasoned for his passage ?
 No.

Up, sword ; and know thou a more horrid hent.³
 When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage ;
 Or in the incestuous pleasures of his bed ;
 At gaming, swearing ; or about some act
 That has no relish of salvation in't :
 Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven ;
 And that his soul may be as damned, and black,
 As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays ;
 This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. *[Exit.]*

The King rises and advances.

King. My words fly up, my thoughts remain below ;
 Words, without thoughts, never to heaven go.⁴ *[Exit.]*

¹ "That would be scanned"—that requires consideration.

² The quarto reads, *base* and *silly*.

³ Shakspeare has used the verb to *hent*, to take, to lay hold on, elsewhere ; but the word is here used as a substantive, for *hold* or *opportunity*.

⁴ First quarto :—

"No king on earth is safe, if God's his foe."

SCENE IV. *Another Room in the same.**Enter Queen and POLONIUS.*

Pol. He will come straight. Look, you lay home
to him ;

Tell him, his pranks have been too broad to bear with ;
And that your grace hath screened and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll silence me e'en here.

'Pray you, be round with him.¹

Queen.

I'll warrant you ;

Fear me not ;—withdraw, I hear him coming.

[*POLONIUS hides himself.*]

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Now, mother, what's the matter ?

Queen. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended

Ham. Mother, you have my father much offended.

Queen. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

Ham. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

Queen. Why, how now, Hamlet ?

Ham.

What's the matter now ?

Queen. Have you forgot me ?

Ham.

No, by the rood, not so.

You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife ;

And,—'would it were not so !—you are my mother.

Queen. Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.

Ham. Come, come, and sit you down ; you shall
not budge ;

You go not, till I set you up a glass

Where you may see the inmost part of you.

Queen. What wilt thou do ? thou wilt not murder
me ?

Help, help, ho !

¹ The folio here interposes the following speech :—

" *Ham.* [*Within.*] Mother, mother, mother."

The circumstance of Polonius hiding himself behind the arras, and the manner of his death, are found in the old black letter prose *Hystory of Hamblett*.

Pol. [*Behind.*] What, ho! help!

Ham. How now! a rat?
[*Draws.*]

Dead, for a ducat, dead.

[*HAMLET makes a pass through the arras.*]

Pol. [*Behind.*] O, I am slain.

[*Falls and dies.*]

Queen. O me, what hast thou done?

Ham. Nay, I know not.

Is it the king?

[*Lifts up the arras, and draws forth POLONIUS.*]

Queen. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

Ham. A bloody deed; almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

Queen. As kill a king!

Ham. Ay, lady, 'twas my word.—

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

[*To POLONIUS.*]

I took thee for thy better; take thy fortune:

Thou find'st to be too busy, is some danger.—

Leave wringing of your hands. Peace; sit you
down,

And let me wring your heart; for so I shall,

If it be made of penetrable stuff;

If damned custom have not brazed it so,

That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

Queen. What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy
tongue

In noise so rude against me?

Ham.

Such an act,

That blurs the grace and blush of modesty;

Calls virtue, hypocrite; takes off the rose

From the fair forehead of an innocent love,

And sets a blister there; makes marriage-vows

As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed

As from the body of contraction plucks

The very soul; and sweet religion makes

A rhapsody of words. Heaven's face doth glow;

Yea, this solidity and compound mass,

With tristful visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.¹

Queen. Ah me, what act,
That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?²

Ham. Look here upon this picture, and on this;
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See, what a grace was seated on this brow!
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station³ like the herald Mercury,
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
A combination, and a form, indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man.
This was your husband.—Look you now, what follows.
Here is your husband; like a mildewed ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother.⁴ Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?
You cannot call it love; for, at your age,
The heyday in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgment. And what judgment
Would step from this to this? [Sense⁵ sure you have,
Else could you not have motion: but, sure, that sense
Is apoplexed; for madness would not err;
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd,
But it reserved some quantity of choice,
To serve in such a difference.] What devil was't,

¹ The quarto of 1604 gives this passage thus:—

“————— Heaven's face does glow
O'er this solidity and compound mass
With *heated* visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.”

² *Index* is here used in one of its least common senses, as a *preparatory sketch in dumb show, prefixed to the act of a play*.

³ It is evident, from this passage, that whole-length pictures of the two kings were formerly introduced. *Station* does not mean the spot where any one is placed, but the *act of standing, the attitude*.

⁴ Here the allusion is to Pharaoh's dream, Genesis, xli.

⁵ *Sense* here is not used for *reason*; but for *sensation, feeling, or perception*.

That thus hath cozened you at hoodman blind?¹

[Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense,
Could not so mope.²]

O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
If thou canst mutine³ in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire;⁴ proclaim no shame,
When the compulsive ardor gives the charge;
Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
And reason panders will.

Queen. O Hamlet, speak no more.
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;
And there I see such black and grained⁵ spots
As will not leave their tinct.

Ham. Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an enseamed⁶ bed;
Stewed in corruption; honeying, and making love
Over the nasty sty;—

Queen. O, speak to me no more;
These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears.
No more, sweet Hamlet.

Ham. A murderer, and a villain;
A slave, that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord;—a vice⁷ of kings;

¹ "The hoodwinke play, or hoodman blind, in some place, called *blind-man-buf*."—*Baret*. It is *hob-man-blind* in the quarto of 1603.

² i. e. could not be so dull and stupid.

³ *Mutine* for *mutiny*. This is the old form of the verb.

⁴ Thus in the quarto of 1603:—

"Why, appetite with you is in the wane,
Your blood runs backward now from whence it came;
Who'll chide hot blood within a virgin's heart,
When lust shall dwell within a matron's breast?"

⁵ "*Grained spots*;" that is, dyed in *grain*, deeply imbued.

⁶ i. e. greasy, rank, gross. It is a term borrowed from falconry. The *seam* of any animal was the fat or tallow; and a hawk was said to be *enseamed* when she was too fat or gross for flight. It should be remarked, that the quarto of 1603 reads *incestuous*, as does that of 1611.

⁷ i. e. "the low mimic, the counterfeit, a dizard, or common *vice* and jester, *counterfeiting* the gestures of any man."—*Fleming*. Shakspeare afterwards calls him *a king of shreds and patches*, alluding to the parti-colored habit of the *vice* or fool in a play.

A cutpurse of the empire and the rule ;
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket !

Queen.

No more.

*Enter Ghost.*¹

Ham.

A king

Of shreds and patches.—

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards !—What would your gracious
figure ?

Queen. Alas, he's mad.

Ham. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, lapsed in time and passion,² lets go by
The important acting of your dread command ?
O, say !

Ghost. Do not forget. This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But, look ! amazement on thy mother sits.
O, step between her and her fighting soul ;
Conceit³ in weakest bodies strongest works.
Speak to her, Hamlet.

Ham. How is it with you, lady ?

Queen. Alas, how is't with you ?
That you do bend your eyes on vacancy,
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse ?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep ;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,⁴
Starts up, and stands on end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look ?

¹ The first quarto adds, "*in his night-gown.*"

² "Lapsed in time and passion." Johnson explains this—"That having suffered time to slip, and passion to cool, lets go by," &c. This explanation is confirmed by the quarto of 1603:—

"Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That I thus long have let revenge slip by?"

³ *Conceit*, for conception, imagination.

⁴ The hair is excrementitious ; that is, without life or sensation.

Ham. On him! on him!—Look you, how pale he glares!

His form and cause conjoined, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable.¹—Do not look upon me;
Lest, with this piteous action, you convert
My stern affects:² then what I have to do
Will want true color; tears, perchance, for blood.

Queen. To whom do you speak this?

Ham. Do you see nothing there?

Queen. Nothing at all; yet all, that is, I see.

Ham. Nor did you nothing hear?

Queen. No, nothing, but ourselves.

Ham. Why, look you, there! look, how it steals away!

My father, in his habit as he lived!

Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

[*Exit Ghost.*]

Queen. This is the very coinage of your brain.
This bodiless creation ecstasy³
Is very cunning in.

Ham. Ecstasy!

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music. It is not madness,
That I have uttered; bring me to the test,
And I the matter will reword; which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass, but my madness speaks.
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place;
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,

¹ *Capable for susceptible, intelligent.*

² "My stern affects." All former editions read—"My stern effects." We should certainly read *affects*, i. e. dispositions, affections of the mind; as in that disputed passage of Othello:—"the young *affects* in me defunct."

³ This speech of the queen has the following remarkable variation in the quarto of 1603:—

"Alas, it is the weakness of thy brain
Which makes thy tongue to blazon thy heart's grief;
But as I have a soul, I swear to heaven,
I never knew of this most horrid murder:
But, Hamlet, this is only fantasy,
And for my love forget these idle fits."

Infects unseen. Confess yourself to Heaven ;
Repent what's past ; avoid what is to come ;
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue,
For in the fatness of these pursy times,
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg ;
Yea, curb¹ and woo, for leave to do him good.

Queen. O Hamlet ! thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

Ham. O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night ; but go not to my uncle's bed ;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
[That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat
Of habit's devil, is angel yet in this ;²
That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock, or livery,
That aptly is put on.] Refrain to-night ;³
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence ; [⁴the next more easy ;
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And either quell the devil or throw him out
With wondrous potency.] Once more, good night !
And when you are desirous to be blessed,
I'll blessing beg of you.—For this same lord,

[*Pointing to* POLONIUS.]

I do repent. But Heaven hath pleased it so,—
To punish me with this, and this with me ;⁵

¹ i. e. *bow*. “Courber (Fr.), to bow.”

² Dr. Thirlby proposed to read, “Of habits *evil*.” Steevens would read, “Or habits' devil.” It is evident that there is an intended opposition between *angel* and *devil* ; but the passage will, perhaps, bear explaining as it stands :—“That monster custom, who devours all sense (feeling, or perception) of *devilish habits*, is angel yet in this,” &c. This passage might, perhaps, have been as well omitted, after the example of the editors of the folio.

³ Here the quarto of 1603 has two remarkable lines :—

“And, mother, but assist me in revenge,
And in his death your infamy shall die.”

⁴ “The next more easy,” &c. This passage, as far as *potency*, is also omitted in the folio. In the line

“And either quell the devil, or throw him out,”

the word *quell* is wanting in the old copy.

⁵ “To punish me by making me the instrument of this man's death, and to punish this man by my hand.”

That I must be their scourge and minister.
 I will bestow him, and will answer well
 The death I gave him. So, again, good night!—
 I must be cruel, only to be kind;
 Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.—
 But one word more, good lady.

Queen. What shall I do?

Ham. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do.
 Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed;
 Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you his mouse;¹
 And let him for a pair of reechy² kisses,
 Or paddling in your neck with his damned fingers,
 Make you to ravel all this matter out,
 That I essentially am not in madness,
 But mad in craft. 'Twere good, you let him know;
 For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
 Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,³
 Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?
 No, in despite of sense, and secrecy,
 Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
 Let the birds fly; and, like the famous ape,
 To try conclusions,⁴ in the basket creep,
 And break your own neck down.

Queen. Be thou assured, if words be made of
 breath,
 And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
 What thou hast said to me.⁵

Ham. I must to England; ⁶ you know that?

¹ *Mouse*, a term of endearment formerly.

² i. e. *reeky* or fumant. *Reeky* and *reechy* are the same word, and always applied to any vaporous exhalation.

³ For *paddock*, a *toad*, see *Macbeth*, Act i. Sc. 1; and for *gib*, a *cat*, see *King Henry IV.* Part I. Act. i. Sc. 2.

⁴ *To try conclusions* is to put to proof, or try experiments.

⁵ The quarto of 1603 has here another remarkable variation:—

“Hamlet, I vow by that Majesty
 That knows our thoughts and looks into our hearts,
 I will conceal, consent, and do my best,
 What stratagem soe'er thou shalt devise.”

⁶ The manner in which Hamlet came to know that he was to be sent to England is not developed. He expresses surprise when the king mentions it in a future scene; but his design of passing for a madman may account for this.

Queen.

Alack,

I had forgot ; 'tis so concluded on.

Ham. [There's letters sealed ; and my two school-fellows,¹—

Whom I will trust, as I will adders fanged,—

They bear the mandate ; they must sweep my way,

And marshal me to knavery. Let it work ;

For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer

Hoist with his own petar ;² and it shall go hard,

But I will delve one yard below their mines,

And blow them at the moon. O, 'tis most sweet,

When in one line two crafts directly meet.—]

This man shall set me packing.

I'll lug the guts into the neighbor-room.³

Mother, good night.—Indeed, this counsellor

Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,

Who was in life a foolish, prating knave.

Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.

Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally ; HAMLET dragging in*
POLONIUS.

¹ This and the eight following verses are omitted in the folio.

² *Hoist* with his own *petar*. *Hoist* for *hoised*. To *hoise* was the old verb. A *petar* was a kind of mortar used to blow up gates.

³ Hamlet has purposely chosen gross expressions and coarse metaphors, throughout the interview with his mother, perhaps to make his appeal to her feelings the more forcible. The word *guts* was not anciently so offensive to delicacy as it is at present ; the courtly Lyly has used it ; Stanyhurst often in his translation of Virgil, and Chapman in his version of the sixth Iliad.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *The same.*

Enter King, Queen, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. There's matter in these sighs ; these profound heaves :

You must translate ; 'tis fit we understand them.

Where is your son ?

Queen. Bestow this place on us a little while.¹—

[*To ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN,*
who go out.

Ah,² my good lord, what have I seen to-night !

King. What, Gertrude ? How does Hamlet ?

Queen. Mad as the sea, and wind, when both contend

Which is the mightier. In his lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, cries, *A rat ! a rat !*
And, in this brainish apprehension, kills
The unseen good old man.

King. O heavy deed !

It had been so with us, had we been there.

His liberty is full of threats to all ;

To you yourself, to us, to every one.

Alas ! how shall this bloody deed be answered ?

It will be laid to us, whose providence

Should have kept, short, restrained, and out of haunt,³

This mad young man : but, so much was our love,

We would not understand what was most fit ;

But, like the owner of a foul disease,

To keep it from divulging, let it feed

Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone ?

¹ This line does not appear in the folio, in which Guildenstern and Rosencrantz are not brought on the stage at all.

² Quarto—Ah, *mine own* lord.

³ Out of *haunt* means out of *company*.

Queen. To draw apart the body he hath killed;
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore,
Among a mineral¹ of metals base,
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

King. O Gertrude, come away!
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
But we will ship him hence; and this vile deed
We must, with all our majesty and skill,
Both countenance and excuse.—Ho! Guildenstern!

Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Friends both, go join you with some further aid.
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother's closet hath he dragged him.
Go, seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[*Exeunt Ros. and GUIL.*

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends;
And let them know, both what we mean to do,
And what's untimely done; [so, haply, slander,—
Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
As level as the cannon to his blank,²
Transports his poisoned shot, may miss our name,
And hit the woundless air.³—O, come away!
My soul is full of discord and dismay. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Another Room in the same.*

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. ———Safely stowed,—[*Ros. &c. within.*
Hamlet! lord Hamlet!] But soft!⁴—what noise? who
calls on Hamlet? O, here they come.

¹ Shakspeare uses *ore* for *gold*, and *mineral* for *mine*. Bullokar and Blount both define "*or* or *ore*, *gold*; of a golden color." And the Cambridge Dictionary, 1594, under the Latin word *mineralia*, will show how the English *mineral* came to be used for a mine. Thus also in The Golden Remaines of Hales of Eton, 1693:—"Controversies of the times, like spirits in the *minerals*, with all their labor nothing is done."

² The *blank* was the *mark* at which shots or arrows were directed.

³ The passage in brackets is not in the folio. The words "*So, haply, slander*," are also omitted in the quartos; they were supplied by Theobald.

⁴ "*But soft!*" these two words are not in the folio.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Ros. What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

Ham. Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

Ros. Tell us where 'tis; that we may take it thence,

And bear it to the chapel.

Ham. Do not believe it.

Ros. Believe what?

Ham. That I can keep your counsel, and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge!—What replication should be made by the son of a king?

Ros. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

Ham. Ay, sir; that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities.¹ But such officers do the king best services in the end. He keeps them, like an ape doth nuts,² in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed to be last swallowed. When he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

Ros. I understand you not, my lord.

Ham. I am glad of it. A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

Ros. My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

Ham. The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body.³ The king is a thing——

Guil. A thing, my lord?

Ham. Of nothing; bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.⁴

[*Exeunt.*]

¹ Here the quarto 1603 inserts "that makes his liberality your storehouse, but," &c.

² The omission of the words "*doth nuts*," in the old copies, had obscured this passage. Dr. Farmer proposed to read "like an *ape* an *apple*." The words are now supplied from the newly-discovered quarto of 1603.

³ Hamlet affects obscurity. His meaning may be, The king is a *body* without a *kingly soul*, a thing—of nothing."

⁴ "Hide fox, and all after." This was a juvenile sport, most probably what is now called *hoop*, or *hide and seek*, in which one child hides himself, and the rest run *all after*, seeking him. The words are not in the quarto.

SCENE III. *Another Room in the same.**Enter King, attended.*

King. I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.
How dangerous is it, that this man goes loose !
Yet must not we put the strong law on him.
He's loved of the distracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes ;
And, where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weighed,
But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,
This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause. Diseases, desperate grown,
By desperate appliance are relieved,

Enter ROSENCRANTZ.

Or not at all.—How now ? what hath befallen ?

Ros. Where the dead body is bestowed, my lord,
We cannot get from him.

King. But where is he ?

Ros. Without, my lord ; guarded, to know your
pleasure.

King. Bring him before us.

Ros. Ho, Guildenstern ! bring in my lord.

Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN.

King. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius ?

Ham. At supper.

King. At supper ? Where ?

Ham. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten ; a
certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him.
Your worm is your only emperor for diet ; we fat all
creatures else, to fat us ; and we fat ourselves for
maggots. Your fat king, and your lean beggar, is but
variable service ; two dishes, but to one table ; that's
the end.

[*King.* Alas, alas !

Ham. A man may fish with the worm that hath ate of a king; and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.¹]

King. What dost thou mean by this?

Ham. Nothing, but to show you how a king may go a progress² through the guts of a beggar.

King. Where is Polonius?

Ham. In heaven; send thither to see. If your messenger find him not there, seek him i'the other place yourself. But, indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

King. Go seek him there. [*To some Attendants.*

Ham. He will stay till you come.

[*Exeunt Attendants.*

King. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,—

Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done,—must send thee hence
With fiery quickness. Therefore prepare thyself;
The bark is ready, and the wind at help,³
The associates tend,⁴ and every thing is bent
For England.

Ham. For England?

King. Ay, Hamlet.

Ham. Good.

King. So is it, if thou know'st our purposes.

Ham. I see a cherub, that sees them.—But, come; for England!—Farewell, dear mother.

King. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

Ham. My mother. Father and mother is man and wife; man and wife is one flesh; and so, my mother. Come, for England. [*Exit.*

King. Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard;

¹ "Alas, alas!" This speech and the following one of Hamlet, are omitted in the folio.

² A *progress* is a *journey*.

³ i. e. in modern phrase "the wind *serves*," or is right to *aid* or *help* you on your way.

⁴ i. e. attend.

Delay it not, I'll have him hence to-night.
 Away ; for every thing is sealed and done
 That else leans on the affair. Pray you, make haste.
[*Exeunt* Ros. and GUIL.]
 And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught,
 (As my great power thereof may give thee sense ;
 Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
 After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
 Pays homage to us,) thou mayst not coldly set¹
 Our sovereign process ; which imports at full,
 By letters conjuring to that effect,
 The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England ;
 For like the hectic in my blood he rages,
 And thou must cure me. Till I know 'tis done,
 Howe'er my haps, my joys will ne'er begin.² [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV. *A Plain in Denmark.*

Enter FORTINBRAS, *and Forces, marching.*

For. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king ;
 Tell him, that, by his license, Fortinbras
 Claims³ the conveyance of a promised march
 Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
 If that his majesty would aught with us,
 We shall express our duty in his eye,⁴
 And let him know so.

Cap. I will do't, my lord.

For. Go softly on.

[*Exeunt* FORTINBRAS *and Forces.*]

¹ To *set* formerly meant to *estimate*. "To *settle*, or tell the price ; *estimare*."

² The folio reads :—

"Howe'er my *haps*, my joys were ne'er begun."

³ The quarto reads *craves*.

⁴ *Eye* for *presence*. It was the formulary for the royal *presence*.

Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, &c.

[¹ *Ham.* Good sir, whose powers are these?

Cap. They are of Norway, sir.

Ham. How purposed, sir,
I pray you?

Cap. Against some part of Poland.

Ham. Who
Commands them, sir?

Cap. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

Ham. Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier?

Cap. Truly to speak, sir, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground,
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
Nor will it yield to Norway, or the Pole,
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

Ham. Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

Cap. Yes, 'tis already garrisoned.

Ham. Two thousand souls, and twenty thousand
ducats,

Will not debate the question of this straw.
This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace;
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies.—I humbly thank you, sir.

Cap. God be wi' you, sir. [*Exit Captain.*

Ros. Will't please you go, my lord?

Ham. I will be with you straight. Go a little before.
[*Exeunt Ros. and GUIL.*

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good, and market² of his time,
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,³

¹ The remainder of this scene is omitted in the folio.

² i. e. profit.

³ See note on Act i. Sc. 2. It is evident that discursive powers of mind are meant. Bishop Wilkins makes *ratiocination* and *discourse* convertible terms.

Looking before, and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven¹ scruple
Of thinking too precisely on the event,—
A thought, which, quartered, hath but one part wisdom,
And, ever, three parts coward,—I do not know
Why yet I live to say, *This thing's to do*;
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means,
To do't. Examples, gross as earth, exhort me.
Witness, this army of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince;
Whose spirit, with divine ambition puffed,
Makes mouths at the invisible event;
Exposing what is mortal, and unsure,
To all that fortune, death, and danger, dare,
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great,
Is, not to stir without great argument;
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,
When honor's at the stake. How stand I, then,
That have a father killed, a mother stained,
Excitements of my reason, and my blood,²
And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That, for a fantasy, and trick of fame,
Go to their graves like beds; fight for a plot³
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough, and continent,⁴
To hide the slain?—O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! [Exit.

¹ *Craven* is recreant, cowardly. It may be traced from *crant*, *creant*, the old French word for an act of submission.

² Provocations which excite both my reason and my passions to vengeance.

³ A *plot* of ground.

⁴ *Continent* means that which comprehends or incloses.

SCENE V. Elsinore. *A Room in the Castle.**Enter Queen and HORATIO.**Queen.*—I will not speak with her.*Hor.* She is importunate; indeed, distract;
Her mood will needs be pitied.*Queen.* What would she have?*Hor.* She speaks much of her father; says she
hearsThere's tricks i' the world; and hems, and beats her
heart;Spurns enviously¹ at straws; speaks things in doubt,

That carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing,

Yet the unshaped use of it doth move

The hearers to collection;² they aim³ at it,

And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;

Which, as her winks and nods, and gestures yield them,

Indeed, would make one think there might⁴ be thought,Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.⁵*Queen.* 'Twere good she were spoken with; for
she may strew

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

Let her come in.⁶[*Exit HORATIO.*]

To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,

Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss;⁷

So full of artless jealousy is guilt,

It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

¹ "*Enviously*, and spitefully," are treated as synonymous by our old writers.² To *collection*, that is, to *gather* or deduce consequences from such premises.³ The quartos read *yawn*. To *aim* is to *guess*.⁴ Folio—*would*.⁵ *Unhappily*, that is, *mischievously*.⁶ The three first lines of this speech are given to Horatio in the quarto.⁷ Shakspeare is not singular in his use of *amiss* as a substantive. Several instances are adduced by Steevens, and more by Mr. Nares, in his Glossary. "Each *toy*" is each *trifle*.

Re-enter HORATIO, with OPHELIA.

Oph. Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

Queen. How now, Ophelia?

Oph. *How should I your true love know,
From another one?*

*By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon.*¹

[Singing.

Queen. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

Oph. Say you? nay; 'pray you, mark.

He is dead and gone, lady,

[Sings.

He is dead and gone;

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone.

O, ho!

Queen. Nay, but Ophelia,—

Oph.

'Pray you, mark.

White his shroud as the mountain-snow,

[Sings.

Enter King.

Queen. Alas, look here, my lord.

Oph. *Larded² all with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave³ did go,
With true love showers.*

King. How do you, pretty lady?

Oph. Well, God 'ield⁴ you! They say the owl
was a baker's daughter!⁵ Lord, we know what we

¹ These were the badges of pilgrims. The *cockle-shell* was an emblem of their intention to go beyond sea.

² Garnished.

³ Quarto—ground.

⁴ See *Macbeth*, Act i. Sc. 6.

⁵ This (says Mr. Douce) is a common tradition in Gloucestershire, and is thus related:—"Our Savior went into a baker's shop where they were baking, and asked for some bread to eat. The mistress of the shop immediately put a piece of dough in the oven to bake for him, but was reprimanded by her daughter, who, insisting that the piece of dough was too large, reduced it to a very small size. The dough, however, immediately began to swell, and presently became of a most enormous size. Whereupon the baker's daughter cried out, Heugh, heugh, heugh, which

are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

King. Conceit upon her father.

Oph. 'Pray, let us have no words of this; but when they ask you what it means, say you this:

*Good morrow, 'tis Saint Valentine's day,¹
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.*

*Then up he rose, and donned his clothes,
And dupp'd² the chamber-door;
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more.*

King. Pretty Ophelia!

Oph. Indeed, without an oath, I'll make an end on't.

*By Gis, and by Saint Charity,³
Alack, and fie for shame!
Young men will do't if they come to it;
By cock, they are to blame.*

owl-like noise probably induced our Savior to transform her into that bird for her wickedness." The story is related to deter children from illiberal behavior to the poor.

¹ The old copies read:—

"To-morrow 'tis Saint Valentine's day."

The emendation was made by Dr. Farmer. The origin of the choosing of Valentines has not been clearly developed. Mr. Douce traces it to a pagan custom of the same kind during the Lupercalia feasts in honor of Pan and Juno, celebrated in the month of February by the Romans. The anniversary of the good bishop, or Saint Valentine, happening in this month, the pious early promoters of Christianity placed this popular custom under the patronage of the saint, in order to eradicate the notion of its pagan origin. In France the *Valantin* was a movable feast, celebrated on the first Sunday in Lent, which was called the *jour des brandons*, because the boys carried about lighted torches on that day. It is very probable that the saint has nothing to do with the custom; his legend gives no clew to any such supposition. The popular notion that the birds choose their mates about this period, has its rise in the poetical world of fiction.

² "To *dup* is to *do up*, as to *don* is to *do on*, to *doff* to *do off*;" &c.

³ *Saint Charity* is found in the Martyrology on the first of August. "Romæ passio sanctarum virginum Fidei, Spei, et *Charitatis*, quæ sub Hadriano principe martyriæ coronam adeptæ sunt." Spenser mentions her in *Eclog.* v. 225. *By gis* and *by cock* are only corruptions, or rather substitutions, for different forms of imprecation by the sacred name.

*Quoth she, before you tumbled me,
You promised me to wed ;*

[He answers.]

*So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,
An thou hadst not come to my bed.*

King. How long hath she been thus ?

Oph. I hope all will be well. We must be patient :
but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should
lay him i'the cold ground. My brother shall know of
it, and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come,
my coach ! Good night, ladies ; good night, sweet
ladies ; good night, good night. [*Exit.*

King. Follow her close ! give her good watch, I
pray you. [*Exit HORATIO.*

O ! this is the poison of deep grief ; it springs
All from her father's death. And now behold,
O Gertrude, Gertrude,¹
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions ! First, her father slain ;
Next, your son gone ; and he most violent author
Of his own just remove. The people muddied,
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,
For good Polonius' death ; and we have done but
greenly,²

In hugger-mugger³ to inter him. Poor Ophelia
Divided from herself, and her fair judgment ;
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts.
Last, and as much containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France ;
Feeds on his wonder,⁴ keeps himself in clouds,

¹ In the quarto 1603, the king says :—

“ Ah, pretty wretch ! this is a change indeed :
O time, how swiftly runs our joys away !
Content on earth was never certain bred,
To-day we laugh and live, to-morrow dead.”

² *Greenly* is *unskilfully*, with *inexperience*.

³ i. e. *secretly*. “ Clandestinare, to hide or conceal by stealth, or in hugger-mugger.”—*Florio*.

⁴ The quarto reads—“ *Keeps* on his wonder ;” the folio—“ *Feeds* on this wonder.”

And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
 With pestilent speeches of his father's death ;
 Wherein necessity, of matter beggared,
 Will nothing stick our person to arraign
 In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
 Like to a murdering piece,¹ in many places
 Gives me superfluous death ! *[A noise within.*
Queen. Alack ! what noise is this ?²

Enter a Gentleman.

King. Attend.
 Where are my Switzers ?³ Let them guard the door.
 What is the matter ?

Gent. Save yourself, my lord ;
 The ocean, overpeering of his list,
 Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste,
 Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
 O'erbears your officers ! The rabble call him lord ;
 And, as the world were now but to begin,
 Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
 The ratifiers and props of every word,
 They cry, *Choose we ; Laertes shall be king !*⁴
 Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds,
Laertes shall be king, Laertes king !

Queen. How cheerfully on the false trail they cry !
 O this is counter,⁵ you false Danish dogs.

King. The doors are broke. *[Noise within.*

¹ A murdering-piece, or *murderer*, was a small piece of artillery ; in French *meurtrière*. It took its name from the loop-holes and embrasures in towers and fortifications, which were so called. Case-shot, filled with small bullets, nails, old iron, &c., was often used in these *murderers*.

² The speech of the queen is omitted in the quartos.

³ *Switzers*, for royal guards. The Swiss were then, as since, mercenary soldiers of any nation that could afford to pay them.

⁴ The meaning of this contested passage appears to me this :—"The rabble call him lord ; and (*as if* the world were now but to begin, *as if* antiquity and custom, which are the ratifiers and props of every word, were forgotten) *this rabble* cry, *Choose we*," &c.

⁵ Hounds are said to run *counter* when they are upon a false scent, or hunt it by the heel, running backward and mistaking the course of the game.

Enter LAERTES, armed ; Danes following.

Laer. Where is this king?—Sirs, stand you all without.

Danes. No, let's come in.

Laer. I pray you, give me leave.

Danes. We will, we will.

[They retire without the door.]

Laer. I thank you ;—keep the door.—O thou vile king,
Give me my father.

Queen. Calmly, good Laertes.

Laer. That drop of blood that's calm, proclaims me
bastard ;

Cries, cuckold, to my father ; brands the harlot
Even here, between the chaste, unsmirched¹ brow
Of my true mother.

King. What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like ?—
Let him go, Gertrude ; do not fear our person ;
There's such divinity doth hedge² a king,
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will.—Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incensed.—Let him go, Gertrude ;—
Speak, man.

Laer. Where is my father ?

King. Dead.

Queen. But not by him.

King. Let him demand his fill.

Laer. How came he dead ? I'll not be juggled with.
To hell, allegiance ! vows, to the blackest devil !
Conscience, and grace, to the profoundest pit !
I dare damnation. To this point I stand,—
That both the worlds I give to negligence,³
Let come what comes ; only I'll be revenged
Most thoroughly for my father.

King. Who shall stay you ?

¹ *Unsmirched* is unsullied, spotless. See Act i. Sc. 3.

² Quarto 1603—*wall*.

³ " But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer."—*Macbeth*.

Laer. My will, not all the world's ;
And, for my means, I'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little.

King. Good Laertes,
If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge,
That, sweepstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
Winner and loser ?

Laer. None but his enemies.

King. Will you know them, then ?

Laer. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms ;
And like the kind, life-rendering pelican,
Repast them with my blood.¹

King. Why, now you speak
Like a good child, and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensibly² in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgment pierce³
As day does to your eye.

Danes. [*Within.*] Let her come in.

Laer. How now ! what noise is that ?

Enter OPHELIA, fantastically dressed with straws and flowers.

O heat, dry up my brains ! tears seven times salt,^{*}
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye !—
By Heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight,
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May !
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia !
O Heavens ! is't possible, a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life ?
Nature is fine⁴ in love ; and where 'tis fine,

¹ The folio reads *politician* instead of *pelican*.

² Folio—*sensible*.

³ *Pierce* is the reading of the folio. The quarto has *'pear*, an awkward contraction of *appear*.

⁴ "Nature is *fine* in love." The three concluding lines of this speech are not in the quarto. The meaning appears to be, Nature is refined by love, the senses are rendered more ethereal, and some precious portions of the mental energies fly off, or are sent after the beloved object.

It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

Oph. *They bore him barefaced on the bier ;
Hey no nonny, nonny hey nonny ;
And in his grave rained many a tear ;—*

Fare you well, my dove !

Laer. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade
revenge,

It could not move thus.

Oph. You must sing, *Down-a-down, an you call him
a-down-a.* O, how the wheel¹ becomes it ! it is the
false steward, that stole his master's daughter.

Laer. This nothing's more than matter.

Oph. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance ;
'pray you, love, remember ; and there is pansies, that's
for thoughts.²

Laer. A document in madness ; thoughts and re-
membrance fitted.

Oph. There's fennel for you, and columbines ;—
there's rue for you ; and here's some for me ;—we may
call it herb of grace o' Sundays ;—you may wear your
rue with a difference.—There's a daisy.—I would give
you some violets ; but they withered all, when my
father died.—They say he made a good end——

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy,— [Sings.

Laer. Thought³ and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favor, and to prettiness.

Oph. *And will he not come again ?* [Sings.
And will he not come again ?

¹ The *wheel* is the *burden* of a ballad, from the Latin *rota*, a *round*, which is usually accompanied with a burden frequently repeated. Steevens forgot to note from whence he made the following extract, though he knew it was from the preface to some black letter collection of songs or sonnets:—"The song was accounted a good one, though it was not moche graced with the *wheele*, which in no wise accorded with the subject matter thereof."

² Our ancestors gave to almost every flower and plant its emblematic meaning.

³ *Thought*, among our ancestors, was used for *grief*, *care*, *pensiveness*.

*No, no, he is dead ;
Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.*

*His beard was as white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll ;
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan ;
God 'a mercy on his soul !¹*

And of all Christian souls ! I pray God. God be wi' you ! [Exit OPHELIA.]

Laer. Do you see this, O God ?

King. Laertes, I must commune² with your grief,
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me.
If by direct or by collateral hand
They find us touched, we will our kingdom give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
To you in satisfaction ; but, if not,
Be you content to lend your patience to us,
And we shall jointly labor with your soul
To give it due content.³

Laer. Let this be so ;
His means of death, his obscure funeral,⁴—

¹ Poor Ophelia, in her madness, remembers the ends of many old popular ballads. "Bonny Robin" appears to have been a favorite. The editors have not traced the present one. It is introduced in *Eastward Hoe*, written by Jonson, Chapman, and Marston, where some parts of this play are apparently burlesqued.

² The folio reads *common*, which is only a varied orthography of the same word. "We will devise and *common* of these matters."—*Bard.*

³ Thus in the quarto 1603:—

"*King.* Content you, good Laertes, for a time,
Although I know your grief is as a flood,
Brim full of sorrow ; but forbear a while,
And think already the revenge is done
On him that makes you such a hapless son.

"*Laer.* You have prevailed, my lord, a while I strive
To bury grief within a tomb of wrath,
Which once unheard, then the world shall hear
Laertes had a father he held dear.

"*King.* No more of that, ere many days be done
You shall hear that you do not dream upon."

⁴ Folio—*burial*.

No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones,
 No noble rite, nor formal ostentation,¹—
 Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
 That I must call't in question.

King. So you shall;
 And where the offence is, let the great axe fall.
I pray you, go with me. [Exeunt.

SCENE VI. *Another Room in the same.*

Enter HORATIO and a Servant.

Hor. What are they that would speak with me?

Serv. Sailors,² sir;

They say they have letters for you.

Hor. Let them come in.—
 [Exit Servant.

I do not know from what part of the world
 I should be greeted, if not from lord Hamlet.

Enter Sailors.

1 *Sail.* God bless you, sir.

Hor. Let him bless thee too.

1 *Sail.* He shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, sir. It comes³ from the ambassador that was bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

Hor. [Reads.] *Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king; they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled*

¹ The funerals of knights and persons of rank were made with great ceremony, formerly. Sir John Hawkins observes that "the sword, the helmet, the gauntlet, spurs, and tabard, are still hung over the grave of every knight."

² Quarto—*sea-faring men.*

³ Folio—it came.

valor ; and in the grapple I boarded them. On the instant, they got clear of our ship ; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy ; but they knew what they did ; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent ; and repair thou to me with as much haste as thou wouldst fly death. I have words to speak in thine¹ ear, will make thee dumb ; yet are they much too light for the bore² of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England ; of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

He that thou knowest thine, Hamlet.

Come, I will give you way for these your letters ;
And do't the speedier, that you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them. [Exit.

SCENE VII. *Another Room in the same.*

Enter King and LAERTES.

King. Now must your conscience my acquittance
seal,

And you must put me in your heart for friend ;
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he, which hath your noble father slain,
Pursued my life.

Laer. It well appears.—But tell me,
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So crimeful³ and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, greatness, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirred up.

King. O, for two special reasons ;
Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unsinewed,
But yet to me they are strong. The queen, his
mother,

¹ Folio—*your*.

² The *bore* is the caliber of a gun.

³ Quarto—*Criminal*. *Greatness* is omitted in the folio.

Lives almost by his looks ; and for myself,
 (My virtue, or my plague, be it either which,)
 She is so conjunctive to my life and soul,
 That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
 I could not but by her. The other motive,
 Why to a public count I might not go,
 Is, the great love the general gender¹ bear him ;
 Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
 Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
 Convert his gyves to graces ;² so that my arrows,
 Too slightly timbered for so loud a wind,³
 Would have reverted to my bow again,
 And not where I had aimed them.

Laer. And so have I a noble father lost ;
 A sister driven into desperate terms ;
 Whose worth, if praises may go back again,⁴
 Stood challenger on mount of all the age
 For her perfections.—But my revenge will come.

King. Break not your sleeps for that ; you must not
 think

That we are made of stuff so flat and dull,
 That we can let our beard be shook with danger,
 And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more.
 I loved your father, and we love ourself ;
 And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine,—
 How now !⁵ what news ?

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet.
 This to your majesty ; this to the queen.

King. From Hamlet ! who brought them ?

Mess. Sailors, my lord, they say ; I saw them not ;

¹ i. e. the "common race of the people."

² "Would, like the spring which turneth wood to stone, convert his fetters into graces." The quarto reads *work* for *would*.

³ "Lighte shaftes cannot stand in a rough wind."—*Ascham's Torophilus*, 1589, p. 57.

⁴ "If I may praise what has been, but is now to be found no more."

⁵ *How now !* is omitted in the quarto : as is *letters* in the next speech.

They were given me by Claudio ; he received them
Of him that brought them.¹

King. Laertes, you shall hear them.—
Leave us. [Exit Messenger.]

[Reads.] *High and mighty, you shall know I am set
naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave
to see your kingly eyes ; when I shall, first asking your
pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of my sudden
and more strange return.* Hamlet.

What should this mean ! Are all the rest come back ?
Or is it some abuse, and no such thing ?

Laer. Know you the hand ?

King. 'Tis Hamlet's character. *Naked,—*
And, in a postscript here, he says, *alone.*
Can you advise me ?

Laer. I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come ;
It warms the very sickness in my heart,
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
Thus diddest thou.

King. If it be so, Laertes,
As how should it be so ? how otherwise ?—
Will you be ruled by me ?

Laer. Ay, my lord ;
So you will not o'errule me to a peace.²

King. To thine own peace. If he be now re-
turned,—
As checking³ at his voyage, and that he means
No more to undertake it,—I will work him
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall.
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe ;
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice,
And call it accident.

Laer. My lord, I will be ruled ;

¹ This hemistich is not in the folio.

² First folio, omitting *Ay, my lord*, reads, *If so you'll not o'er-rule me to a peace.*

³ To *check*, to hold off, or fly from, as in fear. It is a phrase taken from falconry.

The rather, if you could devise it so,
That I might be the organ.

King.

It falls right.

You have been talked of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein, they say, you shine. Your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him,
As did that one; and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege.¹

Laer.

What part is that, my lord?

King. A very riband in the cap of youth,
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears,
Than settled age his sables and his weeds,
Importing health and graveness.²—Two months since,
Here was a gentleman of Normandy,—
I have seen myself, and served against the French,
And they can well on horseback: but this gallant
Had witchcraft in't; he grew unto his seat;
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse,
As he had been incorpored and demi-natured
With the brave beast. So far he topped my thought,
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,³
Come short of what he did.

Laer.

A Norman was't?

King. A Norman.

Laer. Upon my life, Lamord.

King.

The very same.

Laer. I know him well; he is the brooch, indeed,
And gem of all the nation.

King. He made confession of you;
And gave you such a masterly report,
For art and exercise in your defence,⁴
And for your rapier most especial,
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,

¹ "Of the lowest rank;" *siege* for *seat* or *place*.

² i. e. *implying* or *denoting* gravity and attention to health; if we should not rather read *wealth* for *health*.

³ "That I, in *imagining* and *describing* his feats," &c.

⁴ i. e. fencing.

If one could match you. The scrimers¹ of their nation,
 He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
 If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his
 Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy,
 That he could nothing do, but wish and beg
 Your sudden coming o'er, to play with you.
 Now, out of this,—

Laer. What out of this, my lord?

King. Laertes, was your father dear to you?
 Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
 A face without a heart?

Laer. Why ask you this?

King. Not that I think you did not love your father;
 But that I know love is begun by time;²
 And that I see, in passages of proof,
 Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
 There lives within the very flame of love
 A kind of wick, or snuff, that will abate it;
 And nothing is at a like goodness still;
 For goodness, growing to a plurisy,³
 Dies in his own too-much. That we would do,
 We should do when we would; for this *would*
 changes,
 And hath abatements and delays as many,
 As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;
 And then this *should* is like a spendthrift's sigh,⁴
 That hurts by easing. But, to the quick o' the ulcer:
 Hamlet comes back; what would you undertake,

¹ *Scrimers*, fencers (from *escrimeur*, Fr.). This unfavorable description of French swordsmen is not in the folio.

² "But that I know love is begun by time," &c. "As love is begun by time, and has its gradual increase, so time qualifies and abates it." *Passages of proof* are transactions of daily experience.—The next ten lines are not in the folio.

³ *Plurisy* is *superabundance*.

⁴ The reading of the old copies has been altered in the modern editions to "*a spendthrift sigh*." Mr. Blakeway observes, that "Sorrow for neglected opportunities seems most aptly compared to the *sigh of a spendthrift*—good resolutions not carried into effect are deeply injurious to the moral character. Like sighs, *they hurt by easing*; they unburden the mind and satisfy the conscience, without producing any effect upon the conduct."

To show yourself in deed your father's son
More than in words?

Laer. To cut his throat i' the church.

King. No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize;
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber;
Hamlet, returned, shall know you are come home.
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you; bring you, in fine, together,
And wager o'er your heads. He, being remiss,¹
Most generous and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated,² and in a pass of practice,³
Requite him for your father.

Laer. I will do't;
And, for the purpose, I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank,
So mortal, that but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood, no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death,
That is but scratched withal. I'll touch my point
With this contagion; that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.⁴

King. Let's further think of this;
Weigh, what convenience, both of time and means,
May fit us to our shape. If this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad performance,
'Twere better not assayed; therefore this project
Should have a back, or second, that might hold,

¹ He being not vigilant; or incautious.

² i. e. unblunted; to *bate*, or rather to *rebate*, was to make dull.

³ *Pass of practice* is an *insidious thrust*.

⁴ In the old quarto of 1603, this contrivance originates with the king:—

“When you are hot in midst of all your play,
Among the foils shall a keen rapier lie,
Steeped in a mixture of deadly poison,
That if it draws but the least dram of blood
In any part of him, he cannot live.”

If this should blast in proof.—Soft, let me see ;—
 We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings,¹—
 I ha't.
 When in your motion you are hot and dry,
 (As make your bouts more violent to that end,)
 And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared² him
 A chalice for the nonce ; whereon but sipping,
 If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,³
 Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise ?⁴

Enter Queen.

How now, sweet queen ?

Queen. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
 So fast they follow.—Your sister's drowned, Laertes.

Laer. Drowned ! O where ?

Queen. There is a willow grows ascaunt⁵ the brook,
 That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream ;
 Therewith fantastic garlands did she make
 Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,⁶
 That liberal⁷ shepherds give a grosser name,
 But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them :
 There on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
 Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke ;
 When down her weedy trophies, and herself,
 Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide ;
 And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up :
 Which time, she chanted snatches of old tunes ;⁸

¹ *Cunning* is skill.

² The quarto reads *prefared* ; the folio *prepared*. The modern editors read *preferred*.

³ A *stuck* is a *thrust* (stoccata, Ital.).

⁴ These four words are not in the folio.

⁵ *Ascaunt*, thus the quarto ; the folio reads *aslant*. *Ascaunce* is the same as *askew*, sideways, overthwart (*a travers*, Fr.).

⁶ The ancient botanical name of the *long purples* was *testiculis morionis*, or *orchis priapiscus*. The *grosser name* to which the queen alludes, is sufficiently known in many parts of England. It had kindred appellations in other languages. In Sussex it is said to be called *dead men's hands*. Its various names may be seen in Lyte's Herbal, 1578, or in Cotgrave's Dictionary.

⁷ i. e. *licentious*.

⁸ The quarto reads "snatches of old lauds," i. e. *hymns*.

As one incapable¹ of her own distress,
 Or like a creature native and indued²
 Unto that element; but long it could not be,
 Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
 Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
 To muddy death.

Laer. Alas, then, she is drowned?

Queen. Drowned, drowned.

Laer. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
 And therefore I forbid my tears. But yet³
 It is our trick; nature her custom holds,
 Let shame say what it will: when these are gone,
 The woman will be out.—Adieu, my lord!
 I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
 But that this folly drowns⁴ it. [*Exit.*

King. Let's follow, Gertrude.
 How much I had to do to calm his rage!
 Now fear I, this will give it start again;
 Therefore, let's follow. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I. *A Church-yard.*

Enter two Clowns, with spades, &c.

1 *Clo.* Is she to be buried in Christian burial, that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

2 *Clo.* I tell thee she is; therefore make her grave

¹ i. e. *unsusceptible* of it.

² *Indued* was anciently used in the sense of *endowed*. Shakspeare may, however, have used it for *habited, accustomed*.

³ Thus the quarto 1603:—

“Therefore I will not drown thee in my tears,
 Revenge it is must yield this heart relief,
 For woe begets woe, and grief hangs on grief.”

⁴ The folio reads *doubts* it.

straight. The crowner hath set on her, and finds it Christian burial.

1 *Clo.* How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence?

2 *Clo.* Why, 'tis found so.

1 *Clo.* It must be *se offendendo*; it cannot be else. For here lies the point. If I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act; and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform.¹ Argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

2 *Clo.* Nay, but hear you, goodman delver.

1 *Clo.* Give me leave. Here lies the water; good; here stands the man; good. If the man go to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes; mark you that: but if the water come to him, and drown him, he drowns not himself; argal, he that is not guilty of his own death, shortens not his own life.

2 *Clo.* But is this law?

1 *Clo.* Ay, marry is't; crowner's-quest law.

2 *Clo.* Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out of Christian burial.

1 *Clo.* Why, there thou say'st; and the more pity; that great folks shall have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even-Christian.² Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

2 *Clo.* Was he a gentleman?

1 *Clo.* He was the first that ever bore arms.

2 *Clo.* Why, he had none.³

1 *Clo.* What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says, Adam digged. Could he dig without arms? I'll put another

¹ Warburton says that this is a ridicule on scholastic divisions without distinction, and of distinctions without difference. Shakspeare certainly aims at the legal subtleties used upon occasion of inquests.

² *Even-Christian*, for *fellow-Christian*, was the old mode of expression; *even*, *like*, and *equal*, were synonymous.

³ This speech and the next, as far as *arms*, is not in the quarto.

question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself——

2 *Clo.* Go to.

1 *Clo.* What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

2 *Clo.* The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

1 *Clo.* I like thy wit well, in good faith; the gallows does well. But how does it well? It does well to those that do ill: now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church; argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again; come.

2 *Clo.* Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

1 *Clo.* Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.¹

2 *Clo.* Marry, now I can tell.

1 *Clo.* To't.

2 *Clo.* Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance.

1 *Clo.* Cudgel thy brains no more about it; for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and, when you are asked this question next, say, a grave-maker; the houses that he makes, last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan, and fetch me a stoup of liquor. [Exit 2 Clown.

1 Clown digs, and sings.

In youth, when I did love, did love,²

Methought it was very sweet,

To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove,

O, methought there was nothing meet.

¹ "Ay, tell me that, and unyoke." This was a common phrase for giving over or ceasing to do a thing.

² The original ballad from whence these stanzas are taken, is attributed to lord Vaux, and is printed by Dr. Percy in the first volume of his *Reliques of Antient Poetry*. The *ohs* and the *ahs* were most probably meant to express the interruption of the song by the forcible emission of

Ham. Has this fellow no feeling of his business? he sings at grave-making.

Hor. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

Ham. 'Tis e'en so; the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

1 Clo. *But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath clawed me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me into the land,
As if I had never been such.*

[Throws up a skull.]

Ham. That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once. How the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! This might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'erreaches;¹ one that would circumvent God, might it not?

Hor. It might, my lord.

Ham. Or of a courtier; which could say, *Good-morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?* This might be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it; might it not?

Hor. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Why, e'en so; and now my lady Worm's; chapless, and knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade. Here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the

the grave-digger's breath at each stroke of the mattock. The original runs thus:—

"I lothe that I did love;
In youth that I thought swete:
As time requires for my behove,
Methinks they are not mete.

"For age with stealing steps
Hath claude me with his crouch;
And lusty youth away he leaps,
As there had bene none such."

¹ The folio reads *ore-offices*.

breeding, but to play at loggats¹ with them? mine ache to think on't.

1 Clo. *A pickaxe and a spade, a spade,
For—and a shrouding sheet,
O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.*

[Throws up a skull.

Ham. There's another. Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits² now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce³ with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Humph! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries. Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries,⁴ to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more? ha?

Hor. Not a jot more, my lord.

Ham. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

Hor. Ay, my lord, and of calves-skins too.

Ham. They are sheep, and calves, which seek out assurance⁵ in that. I will speak to this fellow.—Whose grave's this, sirrah?

1 Clo. Mine, sir.—

*O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.* [Sings.

¹ *Loggats*, small logs or pieces of wood. Hence *loggats* was the name of an ancient rustic game, in which a stake was fixed in the ground, at which *loggats* were thrown.

² *Quiddits* are quirks, or subtle questions; and *quillets* are nice and frivolous distinctions. The quarto of 1603 has *quirks* instead of *quiddits*.

³ i. e. *head*.

⁴ "Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries," omitted in the quarto.

⁵ *Deeds* (of parchment) are called the common *assurances* of the realm.

Ham. I think it be thine, indeed, for thou liest in't.

1 *Clo.* You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours; for my part, I do not lie in't, yet it is mine.

Ham. Thou dost lie in't, to be in't, and say it is thine. 'Tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

1 *Clo.* 'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again, from me to you.

Ham. What man dost thou dig it for?

1 *Clo.* For no man, sir.

Ham. What woman, then?

1 *Clo.* For none neither.

Ham. Who is to be buried in't?

1 *Clo.* One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

Ham. How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card,¹ or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three² years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked,³ that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe.—How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

1 *Clo.* Of all the days i' the year, I came to't that day that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.⁴

Ham. How long's that since?

1 *Clo.* Cannot you tell that? Every fool can tell that. It was that very day young Hamlet was born;⁵ he that is mad, and sent into England.

Ham. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

¹ "To speak by the card," is to speak precisely. It is a metaphor from the seaman's *card* or chart.

² *Seven*, quarto 1603.

³ *Picked* is *curious*, over-nice.

⁴ "Look you, here's a skull hath been here this *dozen year*, let me see, ay, ever since our last king Hamlet slew Fortenbrasse in combat: young Hamlet's father, he that's mad." Quarto of 1603. It will be seen that the Poet places this event *thirty years* ago in the present copy. See the next note by sir William Blackstone.

⁵ "By this scene, it appears that Hamlet was then thirty years old, and knew Yorick well, who had been dead twenty-three years. And yet in the beginning of the play he is spoken of as a *very young* man, one that designed to go back to school, i. e. to the university of Wittenberg. The Poet in the fifth act had forgot what he wrote in the first."—*Blackstone*.

1 *Clo.* Why, because he was mad. He shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, 'tis no great matter there.

Ham. Why?

1 *Clo.* 'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

Ham. How came he mad?

1 *Clo.* Very strangely, they say.

Ham. How strangely?

1 *Clo.* 'Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Ham. Upon what ground?

1 *Clo.* Why, here in Denmark. I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

Ham. How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

1 *Clo.* 'Faith, if he be not rotten before he die, (as we have many pocky corsers now-a-days, that scarce will hold the laying in,) he will last you some eight year, or nine year; a tanner will last you nine year.

Ham. Why he more than another?

1 *Clo.* Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that he will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a skull now hath lain you i' the earth three-and-twenty years.

Ham. Whose was it?

1 *Clo.* A whoreson mad fellow's it was; whose do you think it was?

Ham. Nay, I know not.

1 *Clo.* A pestilence on him for a mad rogue, he poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

Ham. This?

[*Takes the skull.*]

1 *Clo.* E'en that.

Ham. Alas, poor Yorick!—I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips, that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont

to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning?¹ quite chap-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber,² and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor³ she must come; make her laugh at that.—'Prythee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Hor. What's that, my lord?

Ham. Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth?

Hor. E'en so.

Ham. And smelt so? pah!

[*Throws down the skull.*]

Hor. E'en so, my lord.

Ham. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

Hor. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

Ham. No, 'faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: As thus; Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam: And why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious⁴ Cæsar, dead, and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.

O, that the earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!⁵
But soft! but soft! aside.—Here comes the king,

Enter Priests, &c. in procession; the corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES, and Mourners following; King, Queen, their Trains, &c.

The queen, the courtiers! Who is this they follow,
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken,
The corse, they follow, did with desperate hand

¹ Folio—*jeering*.

² Quarto—*table*.

³ *Favor* is countenance, complexion.

⁴ *Imperial* is substituted in the folio.

⁵ A *flaw* is a violent gust of wind.

Foredo¹ its own life. 'Twas of some estate :²
Couch we awhile, and mark.

[Retiring with HORATIO.

Laer. What ceremony else ?

Ham.

That is Laertes,

A very noble youth. Mark.

Laer. What ceremony else ?

*1 Priest.*³ Her obsequies have been as far enlarged
As we have warranty. Her death was doubtful ;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged
Till the last trumpet ; for charitable prayers,
Shards,⁴ flints, and pebbles, should be thrown on her ;
Yet here she is allowed her virgin crants,⁵
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.

Laer. Must there no more be done ?

1 Priest.

No more be done !

We should profane the service of the dead,
To sing a *requiem*, and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

Laer.

Lay her i' the earth ;—

And from her fair and unpolluted flesh,
May violets spring !—I tell thee, churlish priest,
A ministering angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling.

Ham.

What, the fair Ophelia !

Queen. Sweets to the sweet. Farewell !

[Scattering flowers.

I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife ;
I thought thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid,
And not have strewed thy grave.

Laer.

O, treble woe

Fall ten times treble on that cursed head,

¹ To *foredo* is to undo, to destroy.

² *Estate* for rank.

³ Quarto—*Doctor*.

⁴ *Shards* does not only mean fragments of pots and tiles, but rubbish of any kind. Our version of the Bible has preserved to us *potsherds*.

⁵ i. e. garlands. Still used in most northern languages. Warburton substituted *chants*.

Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Deprived thee of!—Hold off the earth a while,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.

[*Leaps into the grave.*]

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead ;
Till of this flat a mountain you have made
To o’ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.

Ham. [*Advancing.*] What is he, whose grief
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane.

[*Leaps into the grave.*]

Laer. The devil take thy soul !

[*Grappling with him.*]

Ham. Thou pray’st not well.
I pry’thee, take thy fingers from my throat ;
For, though I am not splenetic and rash,
Yet have I in me something dangerous,
Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand.

King. Pluck them asunder.

Queen.

Hamlet, Hamlet !

All. Gentlemen,—

Hor.

Good my lord, be quiet.

[*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave.*]

Ham. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme,
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

Queen. O my son ! what theme ?

Ham. I loved Ophelia ; forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum.—What wilt thou do for her ?

King. O, he is mad, Laertes.

Queen. For love of God, forbear him.

Ham. Zounds, show me what thou’lt do.

Woo’t weep ? woo’t fight ? woo’t fast ? woo’t tear
thyself ?

Woo’t drink up eisel,¹ eat a crocodile ?

¹ The quarto of 1603 reads :—“ *Will* drink up vessels ? ” and instead of *Oara*, *Oosell*. What river, lake, or firth, Shakspeare meant to designate

I'll do't.—Dost thou come here to whine ?
 To outface me with leaping in her grave ?
 Be buried quick with her, and so will I.
 And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
 Millions of acres on us ; till our ground,
 Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
 Make Ossa like a wart ! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,
 I'll rant as well as thou.

Queen. This is mere madness ;
 And thus awhile the fit will work on him ;
 Anon, as patient as the female dove,
 When that her golden couplets are disclosed,¹
 His silence will sit drooping.

Ham. Hear you, sir ;
 What is the reason that you use me thus ?
 I loved you ever. But it is no matter ;
 Let Hercules himself do what he may,
 The cat will mew, the dog will have his day. [*Exit.*

King. I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.—
 [*Exit HORATIO.*
 Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech ;
 [*To LAERTES.*

We'll put the matter to the present push.—
 Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.—
 This grave shall have a living monument.
 An hour of quiet shortly shall we see ;
 Till then, in patience our proceeding be. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A Hall in the Castle.*

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.

Ham. So much for this, sir ; now shall you see the
 other ;—
 You do remember all the circumstance ?

is uncertain, perhaps the Issel ; but the firth of *Iyse* is nearest to his scene of action, and near enough in name. *Woo't* or *wool'o*, in the northern counties, is the common contraction of *wouldst thou* ; and this is the reading of the old copies.

¹ The *golden couplets* alludes to the dove only laying two eggs.

Hor. Remember it, my lord!

Ham. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting
That would not let me sleep; methought I lay
Worse than the mutines¹ in the bilboes.² Rashly,
And praised be rashness for it,—Let us know,
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When our deep plots do pall;³ and that should teach us,
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.

Hor. That is most certain.

Ham. Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown⁴ scarfed about me, in the dark
Groped I to find out them; had my desire;
Fingered their packet; and, in fine, withdrew
To mine own room again; making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,
A royal knavery; an exact command,—
Larded with many several sorts of reasons,—
Importing Denmark's health, and England's too,
With, ho! such bugs⁵ and goblins in my life,—
That, on the supervise,⁶ no leisure bated,
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.

Hor. Is't possible?

Ham. Here's the commission; read it at more
leisure.

But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

Hor. Ay, 'beseech you.

Ham. Being thus benetted round with villanies,

¹ i. e. mutineers.

² The *bilboes* were bars of iron with fetters annexed to them, by which mutinous or disorderly sailors were anciently linked together. The word is derived from *Bilboa*, in Spain, where implements of iron and steel were fabricated.

³ To *pall* was to fade or fall away.

⁴ "Esclavine (says Cotgrave), a sea-gowne, a coarse, high-collared and short-sleeved gowne, reaching to the mid-leg, and used mostly by seamen and sailors."

⁵ "With such *causes of terror* arising from my character and designs." *Bugs* were no less terrific than goblins. We now call them *bugbears*.

⁶ The *supervise* is the looking over; *no leisure bated* means without any abatement or intermission of time.

Or¹ I could make a prologue to my brains,
 They had begun the play.—I sat me down ;
 Devised a new commission ; wrote it fair :
 I once did hold it, as our statist² do,
 A baseness to write fair, and labored much
 How to forget that learning ; but, sir, now
 It did me yeoman's service.³ Wilt thou know
 The effect of what I wrote ?

Hor.

Ay, good my lord.

Ham. An earnest conjuration from the king,—
 As England was his faithful tributary ;
 As love between them like the palm might flourish ;
 As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,
 And stand a comma⁴ 'tween their amities ;
 And many such like as's of great charge,—
 That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
 Without debatement further, more, or less,
 He should the bearers put to sudden death,
 Not shriving time allowed.⁵

Hor.

How was this sealed ?

Ham. Why, even in that was Heaven ordinant ;
 I had my father's signet in my purse,
 Which was the model of that Danish seal ;
 Folded the writ up in form of the other ;
 Subscribed it ; gave't the impression ; placed it safely,
 The changeling never known. Now, the next day
 Was our sea-fight ; and what to this was sequent
 Thou know'st already.

Hor. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

Ham. Why, man, they did make love to this employment ;

¹ " Or," for *ere*, before. See *Tempest*, Act i. Sc. 2.

² *Statists* are statesmen. Blackstone says, that "most of our great men of Shakspeare's time wrote very bad hands ; their secretaries very neat ones."

³ *Good, substantial service.*

⁴ The *comma* is the note of *connection* and continuity of sentences ; the *period* is the note of *abruption* and disjunction. Shakspeare had it perhaps in his mind to write, That unless England complied with the mandate, *war should put a period to their amity* ; he altered his mode of diction, and thought that, in an opposite sense, he might put, that *peace should stand a comma between their amities.*

⁵ Without allowing time for the *confession* of their sins.

They are not near my conscience ; their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow.

'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites.

Hor. Why, what a king is this?

Ham. Does it not, think thee, stand me now
upon ?¹

He that hath killed my king, and whored my mother ;
Popped in between the election and my hopes ;
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage ; is't not perfect conscience,
To quit him with this arm ; and is't not to be damned,
To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil ?

Hor. It must be shortly known to him from Eng-
land,

What is the issue of the business there.

Ham. It will be short : the interim is mine ;
And a man's life no more than to say, one.
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself ;
For by the image of my cause, I see
The portraiture of his. I'll count² his favors.
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a towering passion.

Hor. Peace ; who comes here ?

*Enter OSRIC.*³

Os. Your lordship is right welcome back to Den-
mark.

Ham. I humbly thank you, sir.—Dost know this
water-fly ?

¹ "*Bethink thee*, does it not become incumbent upon me to requite him," &c. This passage and the three following speeches are not in the quartos.

² "*—I'll count his favors.*" Rowe changed this to "*I'll court his favor*;" which may be right, as Mr. Mason very justly asks, what favors had Hamlet received from Laertes that he was to make account of?

³ The quarto of 1603—"Enter a braggart Gentleman."

Hor. No, my good lord.

Ham. Thy state is the more gracious; for 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much land and fertile; let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess. 'Tis a chough; but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

Osr. Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

Ham. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

Osr. I thank your lordship, 'tis very hot.

Ham. No, believe me, sir, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.

Osr. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

Ham. But yet, methinks, it is very sultry and hot; or my complexion—

Osr. Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry,—as 'twere,—I cannot tell how.—My lord, his majesty bade me signify to you, that he has laid a great wager on your head. Sir, this is the matter,—

Ham. I beseech you, remember—

[HAMLET moves him to put on his hat.]

Osr. Nay, good my lord; for my ease, in good faith.¹ Sir, here is newly come to court, Laertes: believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences,² of very soft society, and great showing. Indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card³ or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent⁴ of what part a gentleman would see.

Ham. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you;—though, I know, to divide him inventorially,

¹ The folio omits this and the following fourteen speeches; and in their place substitutes, "Sir, you are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is at his weapon."

² i. e. *distinguishing* excellencies.

³ "The *card* or *calendar* of gentry." The general preceptor of elegance; the *card* (chart) by which a gentleman is to direct his course; the *calendar* by which he is to order his time.

⁴ *You shall find him containing* and comprising every *quality* which a gentleman would desire to *contemplate* for imitation. Perhaps we should read, "You shall find him the continent."

would dizzy the arithmetic of memory ; and yet but raw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article ; and his infusion of ~~such~~ dearth¹ and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror ; and, who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.²

Osr. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

Ham. The concernancy, sir ? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath ?

Osr. Sir ?

Hor. Is't not possible to understand in another tongue ? You will do't, sir, really.³

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman ?

Osr. Of Laertes ?

Hor. His purse is empty already ; all his golden words are spent.

Ham. Of him, sir.

Osr. I know you are not ignorant——

Ham. I would you did, sir ; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me.⁴—Well, sir.

Osr. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is——

Ham. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence ; but, to know a man well, were to know himself.⁵

Osr. I mean, sir, for his weapon ; but in the impu-

¹ *Dearth*, according to Tooke, is “the third person singular of the verb *to dere* ; it means some cause which *dereth*, i. e. maketh dear ; or hurteth, or doth mischief.” *Dearth* was used for *scarcity*, as well as *dearness*.

² This speech is a ridicule of the euphuism, or court-jargon of that time.

³ This interrogatory remark is very obscure. The sense may be, “Is it not possible for this fantastic fellow to understand in plainer language ? You will, however, imitate his jargon admirably, really, sir.” It seems very probable that “another tongue,” is an error of the press for “mother tongue.”

⁴ What Hamlet would have added we know not ; but surely Shakespeare's use of the word *approve*, upon all occasions, is against Johnson's explanation of it—“*to recommend to approbation*.”

⁵ I dare not pretend to know him, lest I should pretend to an equality ; no man can completely know another, but by knowing himself.

tation laid on him by them, in his meed¹ he's unfellowed.

Ham. What's his weapon?

Osr. Rapier and dagger.

Ham. That's two of his weapons; but, well.

Osr. The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses; against the which he has impawned,² as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers,³ and so. Three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

Ham. What call you the carriages?

Hor. I knew you must be edified by the margent⁴ ere you had done.

Osr. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

Ham. The phrase would be more german⁵ to the matter, if we could carry a cannon by our sides; I would it might be hangers till then. But, on. Six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this impawned, as you call it?

Osr. The king, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits;⁶ he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

Ham. How, if I answer no?

Osr. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

¹ *Meed is merit.*

² "*Impawned.*" The folio reads *imponed*. *Pignare*, in Italian, signifies both to *impawn* and to *lay a wager*. The *stakes* are, indeed, a *gage* or *pledge*.

³ *Hangers*, that part of the belt by which the sword was suspended.

⁴ "*The margent.*" The gloss or commentary, in old books, was usually on the *margin* of the leaf.

⁵ i. e. more *akin*.

⁶ The conditions of the wager are thus given in the quarto of 1603:—

"Marry, sir, that young Laertes in twelve venies
At rapier and dagger, do not get three odds of you."

Ham. Sir, I will walk here in the hall ; if it please his majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me. Let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will ~~win~~ for him, if I can ; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame, and the odd hits.

Osr. Shall I deliver you so ?

Ham. To this effect, sir ; after what flourish your nature will.

Osr. I commend my duty to your lordship. [*Exit.*

Ham. Yours, yours.—He does well to commend ~~it~~ himself ; there are no tongues else for's turn.

Hor. This lapwing¹ runs away with the shell on his head.

Ham. He did comply² with his dug, before he sucked it. Thus has he (and many more of the same bevy,³ that, I know, the drossy age dotes on) only got the tune of the time, and outward habit of encounter ;⁴ a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fanned and winnowed opinions ;⁵ and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

*Enter a Lord.*⁶

Lord. My lord, his majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall. He sends to know if your

¹ Horatio means to call Osric a raw, unfledged, foolish fellow. It was a common comparison for a forward fool. Thus in Meres's *Wits Treasury*, 1598 :—"As the lapwing runneth away with the shell on her head, as soon as she is hatched," &c.

² "He did *comply* with his dug, before he sucked it." See Act ii. Sc. 2.

³ The folio reads, "*mine* more of the same bevy."—*Mine* is evidently a misprint, and more likely for *manie* (i. e. many) than *mine*. The quarto of 1604 reads, "*many* more of the same *breed*."

⁴ "Outward habit of encounter" is exterior politeness of address.

⁵ The folio reads *fond* and winnowed. Fanned and winnowed are almost always coupled by old writers. The meaning is, "These men have got the cant of the day ; a kind of frothy collection of fashionable prattle, which yet carries them through with the most light and inconsequential judgments ; but if brought to the trial by the slightest breath of rational conversation, the bubbles burst."

⁶ All that passes between Hamlet and this lord is omitted in the folio.

pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

Ham. I am constant to my purposes; they follow the king's pleasure. If his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now, or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

Lord. The king, and queen, and all are coming down.

Ham. In happy time.

Lord. The queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes, before you fall to play.

Ham. She well instructs me. [Exit Lord.]

Hor. You will lose this wager, my lord.

Ham. I do not think so; since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart; but it is no matter.

Hor. Nay, good my lord,—

Ham. It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving,¹ as would, perhaps, trouble a woman.

Hor. If your mind dislike any thing, obey it. I will forestall their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

Ham. Not a whit; we defy augury. There is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all. Since no man, of aught he leaves,—knows;—what is't to leave betimes?² Let be.

¹ i. e. misgiving; a giving against, or an internal feeling and prognostic of evil.

² This is the reading of the folio; the quarto reads, "Since no man *has* aught of *what* he leaves. What is't to leave betimes." *Has* is evidently here a blunder for *knows*. Johnson thus interprets the passage:—"Since no man *knows* aught of the state which *he leaves*, since he cannot judge what other years may produce, why should we be afraid of *leaving* life betimes?" Warburton's explanation is very ingenious, but perhaps strains the Poet's meaning farther than he intended. "It is true, that by death we lose all the goods of life; yet, seeing this loss is no otherwise an evil than as we are sensible of it, and since death removes all sense of it, what matters it how soon we lose them?"

Enter King, Queen, LAERTES, Lords, OSRIC, and Attendants, with foils, &c.

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[The King puts the hand of LAERTES into that of HAMLET.]

Ham. Give me your pardon, sir. I have done you wrong;

But pardon it, as you are a gentleman.

This presence¹ knows, and you must needs have heard,
How I am punished with a sore distraction.

What I have done,

That might your nature, honor, and exception,

Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

Was't Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never, Hamlet.

If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,

And, when he's not himself, does wrong Laertes,

Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.

Who does it then? His madness.—If't be so,

Hamlet is of the faction that is wronged;

His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

Sir, in this audience,²

Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil

Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,

That I have shot my arrow o'er the house,

And hurt my brother.

Laer. I am satisfied in nature,

Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most

To my revenge; but in my terms of honor,

I stand aloof; and will no reconciliation,

Till by some elder masters, of known honor,

I have a voice and precedent of peace,

To keep my name ungorged.³ But till that time,

I do receive your offered love like love,

And will not wrong it.

Ham.

I embrace it freely,

¹ i. e. the king and queen.

² This line is not in the quarto.

³ i. e. unwounded.

And will this brother's wager frankly play.—
Give us the foils ; come on.

Laer. Come, one for me.

Ham. I'll be your foil, Laertes ; in mine ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.

Laer. You mock me, sir.

Ham. No, by this hand.

King. Give them the foils, young Osric.—Cousin
Hamlet,

You know the wager ?

Ham. Very well, my lord ;
Your grace hath laid the odds¹ o' the weaker side.

King. I do not fear it. I have seen you both.—
But since he's bettered, we have therefore odds.

Laer. This is too heavy ; let me see another.

Ham. This likes me well. These foils have all a
length ? *[They prepare to play.]*

Osr. Ay, my good lord.

King. Set me the stoups² of wine upon that table.—
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire.
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath ;
And in the cup an union³ shall he throw,
Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups ;
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,
Now the king drinks to Hamlet.—Come, begin ;—
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

¹ The king had wagered *six Barbary horses* to a few *rapiers, poniards, &c.* ; that is, about *twenty* to one.—These are the *odds* here meant. The odds the king means in the next speech were *twelve* to *nine* in favor of Hamlet, by Laertes giving him three.

² *Stoup* is a common word in Scotland at this day, and denotes a pewter vessel resembling our wine measures ; but of no determinate quantity.

³ An *union* is a precious pearl, remarkable for its size. Under pretence of throwing a pearl into the cup, the king may be supposed to drop some poisonous drug into the wine. Hamlet subsequently asks him tauntingly, "*Is the union here ?*"

Ham. Come on, sir.

Laer. Come, my lord. [*They play.*

Ham. One.

Laer. No.

Ham. Judgment.

Osr. A hit, a very palpable hit.

Laer. Well,—again.

King. Stay, give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine;

Here's to thy health.—Give him the cup.

[*Trumpets sound; and cannon shot off within.*

Ham. I'd play this bout first; set it by awhile.

Come.—Another hit; what say you? [*They play.*

Laer. A touch, a touch, I do confess.

King. Our son shall win.

Queen. He's fat, and scant of breath.—

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin; rub thy brows.

The queen carouses¹ to thy fortune, Hamlet.

Ham. Good madam,—

King. Gertrude, do not drink.

Queen. I will, my lord;—I pray you, pardon me.

King. It is the poisoned cup; it is too late. [*Aside.*

Ham. I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.

Laer. My lord, I'll hit him now.

King. I do not think it.

Laer. And yet it is almost against my conscience.

[*Aside.*

Ham. Come, for the third, Laertes. You do but dally;

I pray you, pass with your best violence;

I am afeard you make a wanton² of me.

Laer. Say you so? come on. [*They play.*

Osr. Nothing neither way.

Laer. Have at you now.

[*LAERTES wounds HAMLET; then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and HAMLET wounds LAERTES.*

¹ i. e. the queen drinks to thy good success.

² i. e. you trifle or play with me as if I were a child.

King. Part them ; they are incensed.

Ham. Nay, come again. [*The Queen falls.*]

Osr. Look to the queen there, ho !

Hor. They bleed on both sides ;—how is it, my lord ?

Osr. How is't, Laertes ?

Laer. Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe,
Osrice ;

I am justly killed with mine own treachery.

Ham. How does the queen ?

King. She swoons to see them bleed.

Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear
Hamlet !

The drink, the drink ;—I am poisoned ! [*Dies.*]

Ham. O villany !—Ho ! let the door be locked.

Treachery ! seek it out. [*LAERTES falls.*]

Laer. It is here, Hamlet ; Hamlet, thou art slain ;

No medicine in the world can do thee good ;

In thee there is not half an hour's life.

The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,

Unbated,¹ and envenomed. The foul practice

Hath turned itself on me ; lo, here I lie,

Never to rise again. Thy mother's poisoned ;

I can no more ; the king, the king's to blame.

Ham. The point

Envenomed too !—Then, venom, to thy work.²

[*Stabs the King.*]

Osr. and Lords. Treason ! treason !

King. O, yet defend me, friends, I am but hurt.

Ham. Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned
Dane,

Drink off this potion.—Is the union here ?

Follow my mother. [*King dies.*]

Laer. He is justly served ;—

It is a poison tempered by himself.

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet.

¹ See note 2, p. 365.

² In the quarto of 1603 :—

“ The poisoned instrument within my hand ?

Then venom to thy venom ; die, damned villain :

Come, drink, here lies thy union here.

[*King dies.*”]

Mine and my father's death come not upon thee ;
Nor thine on me ! [Dies.]

Ham. Heaven make thee free of it ! I follow thee.
I am dead, Horatio.—Wretched queen, adieu !—
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,
Had I but time, (as this fell sergeant,¹ death,
Is strict in his arrest,) O, I could tell you,—
But let it be.—Horatio, I am dead ;
Thou liv'st ; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.

Hor. Never believe it ;
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane,
Here's yet some liquor left.

Ham. As thou'rt a man,—
Give me the cup ; let go ; by Heaven, I'll have it.—
O God !—Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me !
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.— [March afar off, and shot within.]
What warlike noise is this ?

Osr. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from
Poland,
To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

Ham. O, I die, Horatio ;
The potent poison quite o'ercrows² my spirit.
I cannot live to hear the news from England ;
But I do prophesy the election lights
On Fortinbras : he has my dying voice ;
So tell him, with the occurrents, more or less,
Which have solicited,³—The rest is silence. [Dies.]

Hor. Now cracks a noble heart.—Good night, sweet
prince ;

¹ A *sergeant* was a bailiff or sheriff's officer.

² To *overcrow* is to overcome, to subdue.

³ "The *occurrents* which have *solicited*"—the *occurrences* or *incidents* which have *incited*. The sentence is left unfinished.

And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest !
 Why does the drum come hither ? [*March within.*

Enter FORTINBRAS, *the* English Ambassadors, *and*
others.

Fort. Where is this sight ?

Hor. What is it you would see ?
 If aught of woe, or wonder, cease your search.

Fort. This quarry cries on havoc !¹—O proud death !
 What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
 That thou so many princes, at a shot,
 So bloodily hast struck ?

1 *Amb.* The sight is dismal ;
 And our affairs from England come too late.
 The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,
 To tell him, his commandment is fulfilled,
 That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead :
 Where should we have our thanks ?

Hor. Not from his mouth,
 Had it the ability of life to thank you ;
 He never gave commandment for their death.
 But since, so jump² upon this bloody question,
 You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
 Are here arrived ; give order that these bodies
 High on a stage be placed to the view ;
 And let me speak, to the yet unknowing world,
 How these things came about. So shall you hear
 Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts ;³
 Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters ;
 Of deaths put on⁴ by cunning, and forced cause ;
 And, in this upshot, purposes mistook

¹ " This quarry cries on havoc ! " To *cry on* was to *exclaim against*. *Quarry* was the term used for a heap of slaughtered game. See *Macbeth*, Act iv. Sc. 3.

² It has been already observed that *jump* and *just*, or *exactly*, are synonymous. Vide note on Act i. Sc. 1.

³ Of *sanguinary* and unnatural acts, to which the perpetrator was instigated by concupiscence or "*carnal stings*." The allusion is to the murder of old Hamlet by his brother.

⁴ i. e. *instigated, produced*. Instead of "*forced cause*," the quartos read, "*for no cause*."

Fallen on the inventors' heads. All this can I
Truly deliver.

Fort. Let us haste to hear it,
And call the noblest to the audience.
For me, with sorrow, I embrace my fortune ;
I have some rights of memory ¹ in this kingdom,
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

Hor. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more ;
But let this same be presently performed,
Even while men's minds are wild ; lest more mischance
On plots and errors happen.

Fort. Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage ;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have proved most royally ; and, for his passage,
The soldier's music, and the rites of war,
Speak loudly for him.—

Take up the bodies.—Such a sight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.

Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

[*A dead march.*

[*Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies ; after
which a peal of ordnance is shot off.*

¹ i. e. some rights which are remembered in this kingdom.

THE following scene in the first quarto, 1603, differs so materially from the revised play, that it has been thought it would not be unacceptable to the reader :—

Enter HORATIO and the Queen.

Hor. Madam, your son is safe arrived in Denmarke ;
This letter I even now received of him,
Whereas he writes how he escaped the danger,
And subtle treason that the king had plotted,
Being crossed by the contention of the winds,
He found the packet sent to the king of England,
Wherein he saw himself betrayed to death,
As at his next conversion with your grace
He will relate the circumstance at full.

Queen. Then I perceive there's treason in his looks,
That seemed to sugar o'er his villainies ;
But I will sooth and please him for a time,
For murderous minds are always jealous :
But know not you, Horatio, where he is ?

Hor. Yes, madam, and he hath appointed me
To meet him on the east side of the city
To-morrow morning.

Queen. O fail not, good Horatio, and withal commend me
A mother's care to him ; bid him a while
Be wary of his presence, lest that he
Fail in that he goes about.

Hor. Madam, never make doubt of that :
I think by this the news be come to court
He is arrived :
Observe the king, and you shall quickly find,
Hamlet being here, things fell not to his mind.

Queen. But what became of Gilderstone and Rossencraft ?

Hor. He being set ashore, they went for England,
And in the packet there writ down that doom
To be performed on them 'pointed for him :
And by great chance he had his father's seal,
So all was done without discovery.

Queen. Thanks be to Heaven for blessing of the prince.
Horatio, once again I take my leave,
With thousand mother's blessings to my son.

Hor. Madam, adieu !

If the dramas of Shakspeare were to be characterized, each by the particular excellence which distinguishes it from the rest, we must allow to the tragedy of Hamlet the praise of variety. The incidents are so numerous, that the argument of the play would make a long tale. The scenes are interchangeably diversified with merriment and solemnity—with merriment that includes judicious and instructive observations, and solemnity not strained by poetical violence above the natural sentiments of man. New characters appear from time to time in continual succession, exhibiting various forms of life and particular modes of conversation. The pretended madness of Hamlet causes much mirth, the mournful distraction of Ophelia fills the heart with tenderness; and every personage produces the effect intended, from the apparition that, in the first act, chills the blood with horror, to the fop, in the last, that exposes affectation to just contempt.

The conduct is, perhaps, not wholly secure against objections. The action is indeed for the most part in continual progression; but there are some scenes which neither forward nor retard it. Of the feigned madness of Hamlet there appears no adequate cause; for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity. He plays the madman most when he treats Ophelia with so much rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty.

Hamlet is, through the whole piece, rather an instrument than an agent. After he has, by the stratagem of the play, convicted the king, he makes no attempt to punish him; and his death is at last effected by an incident which Hamlet had no part in producing.

The catastrophe is not very happily produced; the exchange of weapons is rather an expedient of necessity, than a stroke of art. A scheme might easily be formed to kill Hamlet with the dagger, and Laertes with the bowl.

The Poet is accused of having shown little regard to poetical justice, and may be charged with equal neglect of poetical probability. The apparition left the regions of the dead to little purpose; the revenge which he demands is not obtained but by the death of him that was required to take it; and the gratification which would arise from the destruction of a usurper and a murderer, is abated by the untimely death of Ophelia, the young, the beautiful, the harmless, and the pious.

JOHNSON.

OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

THE story is taken from the collection of Novels, by Gio Giral di Cinthio, entitled *Hecatommithi*, being the seventh novel of the third decad. No English translation of so early a date as the age of Shakspeare has hitherto been discovered; but the work was translated into French, by Gabriel Chappuys, Paris, 1584. The version is not a faithful one; and Dr. Farmer suspects that through this medium the novel came into English.

The name of Othello may have been suggested by some tale which has escaped our researches, as it occurs in Reynolds's *God's Revenge against Adultery*, standing in one of his arguments as follows:—"She marries Othello, an old German soldier." This history (the eighth) is professed to be an Italian one; and here, also, the name of Iago occurs. It is likewise found in *The History of the famous Euordanus, Prince of Denmark*; with the strange *Adventures of Iago, Prince of Saxonie*, 4to. 1605. It may, indeed, be urged, that these names were adopted from the tragedy before us; but every reader who is conversant with the peculiar style and method in which the work of honest John Reynolds is composed, will acquit him of the slightest familiarity with the scenes of Shakspeare.—*Stevens*.

The time of this play may be ascertained from the following circumstances:—Selymus the Second formed his design against Cyprus in 1569, and took it in 1571. This was the only attempt the Turks ever made upon that island after it came into the hands of the Venetians (which was in 1473); wherefore the time must fall in with some part of that interval. We learn from the play, that there was a junction of the Turkish fleet at Rhodes, in order for the invasion of Cyprus; that it first came sailing towards Cyprus; then went to Rhodes, there met another squadron, and then resumed its way to Cyprus. These are real historical facts, which happened when Mustapha, Selymus's general, attacked Cyprus, in May, 1570; which is, therefore, the true period of this performance.—See Knolles's *History of the Turks*, p. 838, 846, 867.—*Reed*.

The first edition of this play, of which we have any certain knowledge,

was printed by N. O., for Thomas Walkly, to whom it was entered on the Stationers' books, October 6, 1621. The most material variations of this copy from the first folio are pointed out in the notes. The minute differences are so numerous, that to have specified them would only have fatigued the reader. Walkly's Preface will follow these Preliminary Remarks.

Malone first placed the date of the composition of this play in 1611, upon the ground of the allusion, supposed by Warburton, to the creation of the new order of baronets, by King James I. in that year. On the same ground, Mr. Chalmers attributed it to 1614; and Dr. Drake assigned the middle period of 1612. But, this allusion being controverted, Malone subsequently affixed to it the date of 1604, because, as he asserts, "we know it was acted in that year." He has not stated the evidence for this decisive fact; and Mr. Boswell was unable to discover it among his papers, but gives full credit to it, on the ground that "Mr. Malone never expressed himself at random." The allusion to Pliny, translated by Philemon Holland, in 1601, in the simile of the Pontic sea; and the supposed imitation of a passage in Cornwallis's *Essays*, of the same date, seem to have influenced Mr. Malone in settling the date of this play. What is more certain, is, that it was played before king James at court, in 1613; which circumstance is gathered from the MSS. of *Vertue*, the engraver.

"If (says Schlegel) *Romeo and Juliet* shines with the colors of the dawn of morning, but a dawn whose purple clouds already announce the thunder of a sultry day, *Othello* is, on the other hand, a strongly-shaded picture; we might call it a tragical Rembrandt."

Should these parallels between pictorial representation and dramatic poetry be admitted,—for I have my doubts of their propriety,—this is a far more judicious ascription than that of Steevens, who, in a concluding note to this play, would compare it to a picture from the school of Raphael. Poetry is certainly the pabulum of art; and this drama, as every other of our immortal Bard, offers a series of pictures to the imagination, of such varied hues, that artists of every school might from hence be furnished with subjects. What Schlegel means to say, appears to be, that it abounds in strongly-contrasted scenes, but that gloom predominates.

In strong contrast of character, in delineation of the workings of passion in the human breast, in manifestations of profound knowledge of the inmost recesses of the heart, this drama exceeds all that has ever issued from mortal pen. It is indeed true, that "no eloquence is capable of painting the overwhelming catastrophe in *Othello*,—the pressure of feelings which measure out in a moment the abysses of eternity."

WALKLY'S PREFACE TO OTHELLO,

ED. 1622, 4to.

 THE STATIONER TO THE READER.

To set forth a booke without an Epistle, were like to the old English proverbe, "*A blew coat without a badge*;" and the author being dead, I thought good to take that piece of worke upon me: To commend it, I will not; for that which is good, I hope every man will commend without intreaty: and I am the bolder, because the Author's name is sufficient to vent his worke. Thus leaving every one to the liberty of judgment, I have ventured to print this play, and leave it the generall censure. Yours,

THOMAS WALKLY.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Duke of Venice.

BRABANTIO, *a Senator.*

Two other Senators.

GRATIANO, *Brother to Brabantio.*

LODOVICO, *Kinsman to Brabantio.*

OTHELLO, *the Moor :*

CASSIO, *his Lieutenant ;*

IAGO, *his Ancient.*

RODERIGO, *a Venetian Gentleman.*

MONTANO, *Othello's Predecessor in the Government of Cyprus.*

Clown, *Servant to Othello.*

Herald.

DESDEMONA, *Daughter to Brabantio, and Wife to Othello.*

EMILIA, *Wife to Iago.*

BIANCA, *a Courtesan, Mistress to Cassio.*

Officers, Gentlemen, Messengers, Musicians, Sailors,
Attendants, &c.

SCENE, *for the first Act, in Venice ; during the rest of the
Play, at a Seaport in Cyprus.*

OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE.

ACT I.

SCENE I. Venice. *A Street.*

Enter RODERIGO and IAGO.

Roderigo. TUSH, never tell me; I take it much unkindly,

That thou, Iago,—who hast had my purse,
As if the strings were thine,—shouldst know of this.

Iago. 'Sblood, but you will not hear me.—
If ever I did dream of such a matter,
Abhor me.

Rod. Thou told'st me, thou didst hold him in thy hate.

Iago. Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones
of the city,

In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,
Oft capped¹ to him ;—and, by the faith of man,
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place :
But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,
Evades them, with a bombast circumstance,²
Horribly stuffed with epithets of war ;
And, in conclusion, nonsuits
My mediators ; *for, certes*, says he,

¹ To *cap* is to salute by taking off the cap ; it is still an academic phrase. The folio reads, "Off-capped."

² *Circumstance* signifies *circumlocution*.

I have already chose my officer.

And what was he ?

Forsooth, a great arithmetician,¹

One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,

A fellow almost damned in a fair wife ;²

That never set a squadron in the field,

Nor the division of a battle knows

More than a spinster ; unless the bookish theoretic,³

Wherein the toged consuls⁴ can propose

As masterly as he. Mere prattle, without practice,

Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had the election.

And I—of whom his eyes had seen the proof

At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds,

Christian and heathen—must be be-lee'd and calmed

By debtor and creditor, this counter-caster ;⁵

He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,

And I (God bless the mark !) his Moorship's ancient.

Rod. By Heaven, I rather would have been his hangman.

Iago. But there's no remedy ; 'tis the curse of service ;

Preferment goes by letter,⁶ and affection,

Not by the old gradation, where each second

Stood heir to the first. Now, sir, be judge yourself,

¹ Iago probably means to represent Cassio as a man who knew no more of a squadron than the *number* of men it contained. He afterwards calls him "this counter-caster."

² The folio reads, *dambd.* This passage has given rise to much discussion. Mr. Tyrwhitt thought that we should read, "almost damned in a fair life;" alluding to the judgment denounced in the Gospel against those "of whom all men speak well." Mr. Singer would be contented to adopt his emendation, but with a different interpretation:—"A fellow almost damned (i. e. lost from luxurious habits) in the serene or equable tenor of his life." The passage, as it stands at present, has been said by Steevens to mean, according to Iago's licentious manner of expressing himself, no more than a man "very near being married." This seems to have been the case in respect to Cassio. Mr. Boswell suspects that there may be some corruption in the text.

³ i. e. *theory*. See *All's Well that Ends Well*, Act iv. Sc. 3.

⁴ *The rulers of the state*, or civil governors. By *toged* is meant peaceable, in opposition to *warlike* qualifications. The folio reads "*tongued consuls*."

⁵ It was anciently the practice to reckon up sums with counters.

⁶ i. e. by recommendation.

Whether I in any just term am affined ¹
To love the Moor.

Rod. I would not follow him, then.

Iago. O sir, content you ;
I follow him to serve my turn upon him.
We cannot all be masters, nor all masters
Cannot be truly followed. You shall mark
Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,
That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,
Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,
For nought but provender; and, when he's old,
cashiered ;

Whip me such honest knaves.² Others there are,
Who, trimmed in forms and visages of duty,
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves;
And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,
Do well thrive by them, and, when they have lined
their coats,

Do themselves homage : these fellows have some soul ;
And such a one do I profess myself.

For, sir,

It is as sure as you are Roderigo,
Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago.
In following him, I follow but myself :
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
But seeming so, for my peculiar end :
For when my outward action doth demonstrate
The native act and figure of my heart
In compliment extern,³ 'tis not long after
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
For daws ⁴ to peck at. I am not what I am.

Rod. What a full fortune ⁵ does the thick-lips owe,
If he can carry't thus !

Iago. Call up her father,
Rouse him; make after him, poison his delight,

¹ "Do I stand *within* any such *terms* of propinquity to the Moor, as that I am bound to love him?" The first quarto has *assigned*.

² *Knave* is here used for *servant*, but with a mixture of contempt.

³ Outward show of civility.

⁴ This is the reading of the folio. The first quarto reads "*doves*."

⁵ *Full fortune* is *complete* good fortune : to *owe* is to *possess*.

Proclaim him in the streets ; incense her kinsmen,
And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,
Plague him with flies : though that his joy be joy,
Yet throw such changes of vexation on't,
As it may lose some color.

Rod. Here is her father's house ; I'll call aloud.

Iago. Do ; with like timorous accent, and dire yell,
As when, by ¹ night and negligence, the fire
Is spied in populous cities.

Rod. What, ho ! Brabantio ! seignior Brabantio ! ho !

Iago. Awake ! what, ho ! Brabantio ! thieves !
thieves ! thieves !

Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags !
Thieves ! thieves !

BRABANTIO, *above, at a window.*

Bra. What is the reason of this terrible summons ?
What is the matter there ?

Rod. Seignior, is all your family within ?

Iago. Are your doors locked ?

Bra. Why ? wherefore ask you this ?

Iago. 'Zounds, sir, you are robbed ; for shame, put
on your gown ;

Your heart is burst, ² you have lost half your soul ;
Even now, now, very now, an old black ram
Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise ;
Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,
Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you.
Arise, I say.

Bra. What, have you lost your wits ?

Rod. Most reverend seignior, do you know my
voice ?

Bra. Not I ; what are you ?

Rod. My name is—Roderigo.

Bra. The worse welcome ;

I have charged thee not to haunt about my doors.

¹ " *By night and negligence*" means "*in the time of night and negligence.*"

² i. e. is broken.

In honest plainness thou hast heard me say,
My daughter is not for thee ; and now, in madness,
Being full of supper, and distempering draughts,
Upon malicious bravery, dost thou come
To start my quiet.

Rod. Sir, sir, sir, sir,—

Bra. But thou must needs be sure,
My spirit, and my place, have in them power
To make this bitter to thee.

Rod. Patience, good sir.

Bra. What tell'st thou me of robbing? This is
Venice ;

My house is not a grange.¹

Rod. Most grave Brabantio,
In simple and pure soul I come to you.

Iago. 'Zounds, sir, you are one of those that will
not serve God if the devil bid you. Because we come
to do you service, you think we are ruffians. You'll
have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse ;
you'll have your nephews² neigh to you ; you'll have
coursers for cousins, and genets for germans.³

Bra. What profane wretch art thou ?

Iago. I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your
daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with
two backs.

Bra. Thou art a villain.

Iago. You are—a senator.

Bra. This thou shalt answer. I know thee, Ro-
derigo.

Rod. Sir, I will answer any thing. But I beseech
you,

[If't be your pleasure, and most wise consent,
(As partly, I find, it is,) that your fair daughter
At this odd-even⁴ and dull watch o' the night,
Transported—with no worse nor better guard,

¹ *Grange* is, strictly, the farm of a monastery ; but, provincially, any lone house or solitary farm is called a *grange*.

² *Nephews* here mean *grandchildren*.

³ i. e. horses for relations. A *genet* is a Spanish or Barbary horse.

⁴ This *odd-even* appears to mean the interval between *twelve* at night and *one* in the morning.

But with a knave of common hire, a gondolier—
 To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor,—
 If this be known to you, and your allowance,¹
 We then have done you bold and saucy wrongs ;
 But if you know not this, my manners tell me,
 We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe,
 That, from² the sense of all civility,
 I thus would play and trifle with your reverence.
 Your daughter,—if you have not given her leave,—
 I say again, hath made a gross revolt ;
 Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes,
 In an extravagant³ and wheeling stranger,
 Of here and every where. Straight satisfy yourself ;]
 If she be in her chamber, or your house,
 Let loose on me the justice of the state
 For thus deluding you.

Bra.

Strike on the tinder, ho !

Give me a taper ;—call up all my people.—

This accident is not unlike my dream ;

Belief of it oppresses me already.—

Light, I say ! light !

[*Exit, from above.*

Iago.

Farewell ; for I must leave you.

It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,

To be produced (as, if I stay, I shall)

Against the Moor. For, I do know, the state—

However this may gall him with some check⁴—

Cannot with safety cast⁵ him ! for he's embarked

With such loud reason to the Cyprus' wars,

(Which even now stand in act,) that, for their souls,

Another of his fathom they have not,

To lead their business ; in which regard,

Though I do hate him as I do hell-pains,

Yet, for necessity of present life,

I must show out a flag and sign of love,

¹ i. e. done with your approbation.

² That is, in opposition to or departing from the sense of all civility.

³ *Extravagant* is here again used in its Latin sense, for *wandering*. *It* is here used for *on* ; a common substitution in ancient phraseology.

⁴ i. e. some rebuke.

⁵ That is, dismiss him.

Which is, indeed, but sign. That you shall surely find
 him,
 Lead to the Sagittary the raised search;
 And there will I be with him. So, farewell. [*Exit.*]

Enter, below, BRABANTIO, and Servants with torches.

Bra. It is too true an evil; gone she is;
 And what's to come of my despised time,¹
 Is nought but bitterness.—Now, Roderigo,
 Where didst thou see her?—O, unhappy girl!—
 With the Moor, say'st thou?—Who would be a
 father?—

How didst thou know 'twas she? O, thou deceiv'st me
 Past thought!—What said she to you?—Get more
 tapers;

Raise all my kindred.—Are they married, think you?

Rod. Truly, I think they are.

Bra. O Heaven!—How got she out!—O treason
 of the blood!—

Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds
 By what you see them act.—Is there not charms,²
 By which the property of youth and maidhood
 May be abused?³ Have you not read, Roderigo,
 Of some such thing?

Rod. Yes, sir; I have, indeed.

Bra. Call up my brother.—O that you had had her!—
 Some one way, some another.—Do you know
 Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?

Rod. I think I can discover him; if you please
 To get good guard, and go along with me.

Bra. 'Pray you, lead on. At every house I'll call;
 I may command at most.—Get weapons, ho!
 And raise some special officers of night.—
 On, good Roderigo;—I'll deserve your pains. [*Exeunt.*]

¹ *Despised time* is time of no value. So in *Romeo and Juliet*:—

“ ——— expire the term
 Of a *despised* life closed in my breast.”

² The second folio reads, “*Are there not,*” &c.

³ i. e. may be *illuded* or *deceived*.

SCENE II. *The same. Another Street.**Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Attendants.*

Iago. Though in the trade of war I have slain men,
Yet do I hold it very stuff¹ o' the conscience,
To do no contrived murder ; I lack iniquity
Sometimes, to do me service. Nine or ten times
I had thought to have yerked him here under the ribs.

Oth. 'Tis better as it is.

Iago. Nay, but he prated,²
And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms
Against your honor,
That, with the little godliness I have,
I did full hard forbear him. But, I pray, sir,
Are you fast married ? for, be sure of this,—
That the magnifico³ is much beloved ;
And hath, in his effect, a voice potential⁴
As double as the duke's. He will divorce you ;
Or put upon you what restraint and grievance
The law (with all his might, to enforce it on)
Will give him cable.

Oth. Let him do his spite ;
My services, which I have done the signiory,
Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know,
(Which, when I know that boasting is an honor,
I shall promulgate,) I fetch my life and being
From men of royal siege ;⁵ and my demerits⁶

¹ *Stuff* of the conscience is *substance* or *essence* of the conscience. Shakspeare uses the word in the same sense, and in a manner yet more harsh, in *Macbeth* :—

“Cleanse the *stuffed bosom* of that perilous *stuff*.”

² “Of whom is this said ?—Of Roderigo, or Brabantio ?”

³ The chief men of Venice are, by a peculiar name, called *magnifici*, i. e. *magnificoes*.

⁴ i. e. as powerful: as *double* means as *strong*, as *forcible*, as double in effect, as that of the doge.

⁵ “Men who have sat upon royal *thrones*.”

⁶ *Demerits* has the same meaning in Shakspeare as *merits*.

May speak, unbonneted,¹ to as proud a fortune
 As this that I have reached. For know, Iago,
 But that I love the gentle Desdemona,
 I would not my unhoused,² free condition
 Put into circumscription and confine
 For the sea's worth.³ But, look! what lights come
 yonder?

Enter CASSIO, at a distance, and certain Officers with torches.

Iago. These are the raised father, and his friends.
 You were best go in.

Oth. Not I; I must be found;
 My parts, my title, and my perfect soul,
 Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?

Iago. By Janus, I think no.

Oth. The servants of the duke, and my lieutenant.
 The goodness of the night upon you, friends!
 What is the news?

Cas. The duke does greet you, general;
 And he requires your haste, post-haste⁴ appearance,
 Even on the instant.

Oth. What is the matter, think you?

Cas. Something from Cyprus, as I may divine;
 It is a business of some heat. The galleys
 Have sent a dozen sequent messengers
 This very night at one another's heels;
 And many of the consuls,⁵ raised, and met,
 Are at the duke's already. You have been hotly called
 for;

When, being not at your lodging to be found,

¹ "I am his equal or superior in rank; and were it not so, such are my merits, that, *unbonneted*, without the addition of patrician or senatorial dignity, they may speak to as proud a fortune," &c.

² i. e. *unsettled*, free from domestic cares.

³ Pliny, the naturalist, has a chapter on *the riches of the sea*. The expression seems to have been proverbial.

⁴ These words were ordinarily written on the covers of letters or packets requiring the most prompt and speedy conveyance; often reduplicated thus:—"Haste, haste, haste, post-haste!"

⁵ See note 4, p. 400.

The senate hath sent about three several quests,¹
To search you out.

Oth. 'Tis well I am found by you.
I will but spend a word here in the house,

And go with you. [*Exit.*

Cas. Ancient, what makes he here?

Iago. 'Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land
carrack;²

If it prove lawful prize, he's made forever.

Cas. I do not understand.

Iago. He's married.

Cas. To who?

Re-enter OTHELLO.

Iago. Marry, to—come, captain, will you go?

Oth. Have with you.

Cas. Here comes another troop to seek for you.

*Enter BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, and Officers of night,
with torches and weapons.*

Iago. It is Brabantio.—General, be advised;³
He comes to bad intent.

Oth. Hola! stand there!

Rod. Seignior, it is the Moor.

Bra. Down with him, thief!
[*They draw on both sides.*

Iago. You, Roderigo! come, sir, I am for you.

Oth. Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will
rust them.—

Good seignior, you shall more command with years,
Than with your weapons.

Bra. O thou foul thief, where hast thou stowed my
daughter?

Damned as thou art, thou hast enchanted her;

¹ *Quests* are here put for *messengers*; properly it signified *searchers*.

² A *carrack*, or *carrick*, was a ship of great burden, a Spanish galleon;
so named from *carico*, a lading, or freight.

³ i. e. be *cautious*, be *discreet*.

For I'll refer me to all things of sense,
 If she in chains of magic were not bound,
 Whether a maid—so tender, fair, and happy;
 So opposite to marriage, that she shunned
 The wealthy, curled¹ darlings of our nation—
 Would ever have, to incur a general mock,
 Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom
 Of such a thing as thou; to fear, not to delight.²
 [Judge me the world, if 'tis not gross in sense,³
 That thou hast practised on her with foul charms;
 Abused her delicate youth with drugs, or minerals,
 That waken motion.⁴—I'll have it disputed on;
 'Tis probable, and palpable to thinking.
 I therefore apprehend and do attach thee,]
 For an abuser of the world, a practiser
 Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.—
 Lay hold upon him; if he do resist,
 Subdue him at his peril.

Oth. Hold your hands,
 Both you of my inclining, and the rest.
 Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it
 Without a prompter.—Where will you that I go,
 To answer this your charge?

Bra. To prison; till fit time
 Of law, and course of direct session,
 Call thee to answer.

Oth. What if I do obey?
 How may the duke be therewith satisfied;
 Whose messengers are here about my side,
 Upon some present business of the state,
 To bring me to him?

Off. 'Tis true, most worthy seignior,

¹ It was the fashion of the Poet's time for lusty gallants to wear "a curled bush of frizzled hair." See Hall's *Satires*, ed. 1824, book iii. sat. 5.

² "Of such a thing as thou; a thing to fear (i. e. terrify), not to delight."

³ The lines in crotchets are not in the first edition, 4to. 1622.

⁴ The old copy reads, "That *weaken* motion." The emendation is Hanmer's. *Motion* is elsewhere used by our Poet precisely in the sense required here. To *waken* is to incite, to *stir up*.

The duke's in council ; and your noble self,
I am sure, is sent for.

Bra. How ! the duke in council !
In this time of the night ?—Bring him away.
Mine's not an idle cause : the duke himself,
Or any of my brothers of the state,
Cannot but feel this wrong, as 'twere their own.
For if such actions may have passage free,
Bond-slaves, and pagans,¹ shall our statesmen be.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *The same. A Council Chamber.*

The Duke, and Senators, sitting at a table ; Officers attending.

Duke. There is no composition² in these news,
That gives them credit.

1 Sen. Indeed, they are disproportioned ;
My letters say a hundred and seven galleys.

Duke. And mine, a hundred and forty.

2 Sen. And mine, two hundred.
But though they jump not on a just account,
(As in these cases, where the aim³ reports,
'Tis oft with difference,) yet do they all confirm
A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

Duke. Nay, it is possible enough to judgment ;
I do not so secure me in the error,
But the main article I do approve
In fearful sense.

Sailor. [*Within.*] What, ho ! what, ho ! what, ho !

¹ *Pagan* was a word of contempt ; and the reason will appear from its etymology :—“ *Paganus*, villanus vel incultus ; et derivatur a pagus quod est villa. Et quicumque habitat in villa est paganus. Præterea quicumque est extra civitatem Dei, i. e. ecclesiam, dicitur paganus ; anglice, a *paynim*.”—*Ortus Vocabulorum*, 1528.

² *Composition* for consistency. *News* was considered of the plural number by our ancestors.

³ *Aim* is *guess*, conjecture. The quarto reads, “*they aim reports.*” The meaning appears to be, “In these cases where *conjecture* tells the tale.”

Enter an Officer with a Sailor.

Off. A messenger from the galleys.

Duke. Now ; the business ?

Sailor. The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes ;
So was I bid report here to the state,
By seignior Angelo.

Duke. How say you by this change ?

1 Sen. This cannot be,
By no assay of reason ;¹ 'tis a pageant,
To keep us in false gaze. When we consider
The importancy of Cyprus to the Turk ;
And let ourselves again but understand,
That, as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes,
So may he with more facile question² bear it,
[For that it stands not in such warlike brace,³
But altogether lacks the abilities
That Rhodes is dressed in ;—if we make thought of this,
We must not think the Turk is so unskilful,
To leave that latest which concerns him first ;
Neglecting an attempt of ease, and gain,
To wake, and wage,⁴ a danger profitless.]

Duke. Nay, in all confidence, he's not for Rhodes.

Off. Here is more news.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,
Steering with due course towards the isle of Rhodes,
Have there injoined them with an after-fleet.

1 Sen. Ay, so I thought.—How many, as you guess ?

Mess. Of thirty sail ; and now do they restem
Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance
Their purposes toward Cyprus.—Seignior Montano,
Your trusty and most valiant servitor,

¹ "Bring it to the test, it will be found counterfeit."

² That he may carry it with *less dispute*.

³ i. e. in such *state of defence*. To arm was called to *brace on the armor*. The seven following lines were added since the first edition in quarto, 1622.

⁴ To *wake* is to *undertake*. To *wage law* (in the common acceptation) seems to be to *follow*, to *urge*, drive on, or prosecute the law or lawsuits.

With his free duty recommends you thus,
And prays you to believe him.

Duke. 'Tis certain then for Cyprus.—
Marcus Lucchesé, is he not in town?

1 *Sen.* He's now in Florence.

Duke. Write from us; wish¹ him post-post-haste;
despatch.

1 *Sen.* Here comes Brabantio, and the valiant Moor.

Enter BRABANTIO, OTHELLO, IAGO, RODERIGO, and
Officers.

Duke. Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you
Against the general enemy Ottoman.²
I did not see you; welcome, gentle seignior;

[*To* BRABANTIO.

We lacked your counsel and your help to-night.

Bra. So did I yours. Good your grace, pardon me;
Neither my place, nor aught I heard of business,
Hath raised me from my bed; nor doth the general
care³

Take hold on me; for my particular grief
Is of so floodgate and o'erbearing nature,
That it engulfs and swallows other sorrows,
And it is still itself.

Duke. Why, what's the matter?

Bra. My daughter! O my daughter!

Sen. Dead?

Bra. Ay, to me;

She is abused, stolen from me, and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks.⁴
For nature so preposterously to err,

¹ i. e. "*desire* him to make all possible haste." The folio reads:—

"Write from us *to him*, post, post-haste, dispatch."

² It was part of the policy of the Venetian state to employ strangers, and even Moors, in their wars.

³ Steevens would read this line thus:—

"Raised me from bed; nor doth the general care—"

omitting *Hath* and *my*, which he considers playhouse interpolations.

⁴ By the Venetian law the giving love-potions was highly criminal, as appears in the Code "*Della Promission del Malefico*," cap. xvii. *Dei Malefici et Herbarie*.

Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,¹
 Sans witchcraft could not——

Duke. Whoe'er he be, that, in this foul proceeding,
 Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself,
 And you of her, the bloody book of law
 You shall yourself read in the bitter letter,
 After your own sense ; yea, though our proper son
 Stood in your action.²

Bra. Humbly I thank your grace.
 Here is the man, this Moor ; whom now, it seems,
 Your special mandate, for the state affairs,
 Hath hither brought.

Duke and Sen. We are very sorry for it.

Duke. What, in your own part, can you say to this ?
 [To OTHELLO.]

Bra. Nothing, but this is so.

Oth. Most potent, grave, and reverend seigniors,
 My very noble and approved good masters,
 That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
 It is most true ; true, I have married her ;
 The very head and front of my offending³
 Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,
 And little blessed with the set⁴ phrase of peace ;
 For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
 Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used
 Their dearest action⁵ in the tented field ;
 And little of this great world can I speak,
 More than pertains to feats of broil and battle ;
 And therefore little shall I grace my cause,
 In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience,
 I will a round, unvarnished tale deliver
 Of my whole course of love ; what drugs, what charms,
 What conjuration, and what mighty magic,
 (For such proceeding I am charged withal,)
 I won his daughter with.⁶

¹ This line is not in the first quarto.

² "Were the man exposed to your charge or accusation."

³ The *main*, the *whole*, unextenuated.

⁴ The folio reads, "*soft* phrase of peace."

⁵ That is, in modern language, their *best exertion*.

⁶ The word *with*, supplied in the second folio, is wanting in the older copies.

Bra. A maiden never bold;
 Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
 Blushed at herself;¹ and she,—in spite of nature,
 Of years, of country, credit, every thing,—
 To fall in love with what she feared to look on!
 It is a judgment maimed, and most imperfect,
 That will confess—perfection so could err
 Against all rules of nature; and must be driven
 To find out practices of cunning hell,
 Why this should be. I therefore vouch again
 That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,
 Or with some dram conjured to this effect,
 He wrought upon her.

Duke. To vouch this, is no proof;
 Without more certain and more overt test,
 Than these thin habits, and poor likelihoods
 Of modern seeming,² do prefer against him.

1 Sen. But, Othello, speak.
 Did you by indirect and forced courses
 Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?
 Or came it by request, and such fair question
 As soul to soul affordeth?

Oth. I do beseech you,
 Send for the lady to the Sagittary,³
 And let her speak of me before her father.
 If you do find me foul in her report,
 The trust, the office, I do hold of you,⁴
 Not only take away, but let your sentence
 Even fall upon my life.

Duke. Fetch Desdemona hither.

Oth. Ancient, conduct them; you best know the
 place.— [*Exeunt IAGO and Attendants.*]
 And till she come, as truly⁵ as to Heaven

¹ Shakspeare, like other writers of his age, frequently uses the *personal* instead of the *neutral* pronoun.

² i. e. weak show of slight appearance. *Modern* is frequently used for *trifling*, *slight*, or trivial, by Shakspeare.

³ The sign of the fictitious creature so called. See *Troilus and Cressida*, Act v. Sc. 5.

⁴ This line is wanting in the first quarto.

⁵ The first quarto reads, as *faithful*: the next line is omitted in that copy.

I do confess the vices of my blood,
 So justly to your grave ears I'll present
 How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,
 And she in mine.

Duke. Say it, Othello.

Oth. Her father loved me ; oft invited me ;
 Still questioned me the story of my life,
 From year to year ; the battles, sieges, fortunes,
 That I have passed.

I ran it through, even from my boyish days,
 To the very moment that he bade me tell it.
 Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances,
 Of moving accidents, by flood, and field ;
 Of hair-breadth scapes i' the imminent deadly breach ;
 Of being taken by the insolent foe,
 And sold to slavery ; of my redemption thence,
 And portance ¹ in my travel's history :
 Wherein of antres ² vast, and deserts wild,³
 Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch
 heaven,

It was my hint to speak, such was the process ;
 And of the cannibals that each other eat,
 The anthropophagi, and men whose heads
 Do grow beneath their shoulders.⁴ These things to
 hear,

¹ The first quarto reads :—

“ And *with it* all my travel's history.”

By “ my *portance* in my *travel's history*,” perhaps, is meant, my *carriage* or *behavior* in my travels, as described in my narration of them. *Portance* is thus used in *Coriolanus*.

² i. e. caverns (from *antrum*, Lat.).

³ The quarto and first folio read, “ desarts *idle* ;” the second folio reads, “ desarts *wilde* ;” and this reading was adopted by Pope.

“ Mr. Malone taxes the editor of the second folio with ignorance of Shakspeare's meaning ; and *idle* is triumphantly reinstated in the text. It does not seem to have occurred to the commentators that *wild* might add a feature of some import, even to a desert ; whereas *idle*, i. e. *sterile*, leaves it just as it found it, and is (without a pun) the *idlest* epithet which could be applied. Mr. Pope, too, had an ear for rhythm ; and as his reading has some touch of Shakspeare, which the other has not, and is, besides, better poetry, I should hope that it would one day resume its proper place in the text.”—*Gifford. Notes on Sejanus. Ben Jonson's Works.* According to the suggestion of Mr. Gifford, the reading of the second folio is here restored.

⁴ Nothing excited more universal attention than the accounts brought

Would Desdemona seriously incline :
 But still the house affairs would draw her thence ;
 Which ever as she could with haste despatch,
 She'd come again, and with a greedy ear,
 Devour up my discourse ; which I, observing,
 Took once a pliant hour ; and found good means
 To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart,
 That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
 Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
 But not intentively.¹ I did consent ;
 And often did beguile her of her tears,
 When I did speak of some distressful stroke,
 That my youth suffered. My story being done,
 She gave me for my pains a world of sighs :
 She swore ²—In faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing
 strange ;
 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful ;
 She wished she had not heard it ; yet she wished
 That Heaven had made her such a man : she thanked me ;
 And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
 I should but teach him how to tell my story,
 And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake ;
 She loved me for the dangers I had passed ;
 And I loved her that she did pity them.
 This only is the witchcraft I have used ;
 Here comes the lady, let her witness it.

Enter DESDEMONA, IAGO, and Attendants.

Duke. I think this tale would win my daughter too.—
 Good Brabantio,
 Take up this mangled matter at the best.

by sir Walter Raleigh, on his return from his celebrated voyage to
 Guiana, in 1595, of the cannibals, amazons, and especially of the nation—

“ ——— whose heads
 Do grow beneath their shoulders.”

See his Narrative in Hackluyt's Voyages, vol. iii. ed. 1600, fol. p.
 652, et seq. p. 677, &c. These extraordinary reports were universally
 credited.

¹ *Intention* and *attention* were once synonymous.

² To *aver upon faith or honor* was considered swearing.

Men do their broken weapons rather use,
Than their bare hands.

Bra. I pray you, hear her speak ;
If she confess that she was half the wooer,
Destruction on my head, if my bad blame
Light on the man !—Come hither, gentle mistress ;
Do you perceive in all this noble company,
Where most you owe obedience ?

Des. My noble father,
I do perceive here a divided duty.
To you I am bound for life and education ;
My life and education both do learn me
How to respect you ; you are the lord of duty ;
I am hitherto your daughter. But here's my husband ;
And so much duty as my mother showed
To you, preferring you before her father,
So much I challenge that I may profess
Due to the Moor, my lord.

Bra. God be with you !—I have done.—
Please it your grace, on to the state affairs ;
I had rather to adopt a child, than get it.—
Come hither, Moor.

I here do give thee that with all my heart,
Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart
I would keep from thee.—For your sake, jewel,
I am glad at soul I have no other child ;
For thy escape would teach me tyranny,
To hang clogs on them.—I have done, my lord.

Duke. Let me speak like yourself ;¹ and lay a sentence,
Which has a grise,² or step, may help these lovers
Into your favor.

When remedies are past, the griefs are ended,
By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.
To mourn a mischief that is past and gone,
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.

¹ i. e. "let me speak as yourself would speak, were you not too much heated with passion."—*Sir J. Reynolds.*

² *Grise.* This word occurs again, in the same sense, in *Timon of Athens*—

"For every *grise* of fortune
Is smoothed by that below."

What cannot be preserved when fortune takes,
 Patience her injury a mockery makes.
 The robbed, that smiles, steals something from the thief;
 He robs himself, that spends a bootless grief.

Bra. So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile;
 We lose it not, so long as we can smile.
 He bears the sentence well, that nothing bears
 But the free comfort which from thence he hears;
 But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow,
 That, to pay grief, must of poor patience borrow.
 These sentences, to sugar, or to gall,
 Being strong on both sides, are equivocal;
 But words are words; I never yet did hear
 That the bruised heart was pierced through the ear.¹
 I humbly beseech you, proceed to the affairs of state.

Duke. The Turk with a most mighty preparation
 makes for Cyprus.—Othello, the fortitude of the place
 is best known to you; and though we have there a
 substitute of most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a
 sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice
 on you; you must therefore be content to slubber² the
 gloss of your new fortunes with this more stubborn
 and hoisterous expedition.

Oth. The tyrant custom, most grave senators,
 Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war
 My thrice-driven bed of down.³ I do agnize⁴
 A natural and prompt alacrity,
 I find in hardness; and do undertake
 These present wars against the Ottomites.
 Most humbly therefore bending to your state,
 I crave fit disposition for my wife;
 Due reference of place, and exhibition,⁵

¹ i. e. "that the wounds of sorrow were ever cured by the words of consolation." *Pierced* is here used for *penetrated*.

² To *slubber* here means to *obscure*.

³ A *driven* bed is a bed for which the feathers have been selected by *driving* with a fan, which separates the light from the heavy.

⁴ To *agnize* is to acknowledge, confess, or avow. It sometimes signified "to know by some token, to admit, or allow."

⁵ "I desire that proper *disposition* be made for my wife, that she may have a *fit place appointed for her residence*, and such *allowance*, accommodation, and *attendance*, as befits her rank." *Exhibition for allowance* has already occurred in *King Lear*, and in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

With such accommodation, and besort,
As levels with her breeding.

Duke. If you please,
Be't at her father's.

Bra. I'll not have it so.

Oth. Nor I.

Des. Nor I; I would not there reside,
To put my father in impatient thoughts,
By being in his eye. Most gracious duke,
To my unfolding lend a gracious ear;¹
And let me find a charter in your voice,²
To assist my simpleness.

Duke. What would you, Desdemona?

Des. That I did love the Moor to live with him,
My downright violence and storm of fortunes³
May trumpet to the world; my heart's subdued
Even to the very quality⁴ of my lord.
I saw Othello's visage in his mind;
And to his honors, and his valiant parts,
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.
So that, dear lords, if I be left behind
A moth of peace, and he go to the war,
The rites, for which I love him, are bereft me,
And I a heavy interim shall support
By his dear absence. Let me go with him.

Oth. Your voices, lords;—'beseech you, let her will
Have a free way.
Vouch with me, Heaven; I therefore beg it not,
To please the palate of my appetite;
Nor to comply with heat (the young affects,

¹ Thus in the quarto 1622. The folio, to avoid the repetition of the same epithet, reads:—

“——— Most gracious duke,
To my unfolding lend a *prosperous* ear.”

² That is, “let your favor *privilege* me.”

³ By her “*downright violence and storm of fortunes*” Desdemona means, the bold and decisive measures she had taken in giving herself to the Moor. The old quarto reads *scorn* of fortune.

⁴ *Quality* here, as in other passages of Shakspeare, means *profession*. The quarto reads, “My heart's subdued even to the *utmost pleasure* of my lord.”

In me defunct) and proper satisfaction ;¹
 But to be free and bounteous to her mind.
 And Heaven defend your good souls, that you think
 I will your serious and great business scant,
 For² she is with me. No, when light-winged toys
 Of feathered Cupid seel with wanton dulness
 My speculative and active instruments,³
 That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
 Let housewives make a skillet of my helm,
 And all indign and base adversities
 Make head against my estimation !⁴

Duke. Be it as you shall privately determine,
 Either for her stay, or going : the affair cries—haste,
 And speed must answer it ; you must hence to-night.

Des. To-night, my lord ?

Duke. This night.

Oth. With all my heart.

Duke. At nine i' the morning here we'll meet again.

¹ Steevens reads, at the suggestion of sir T. Hanmer:—

“Nor to comply with heat, the young affects,
 In my *distinct* and proper satisfaction.”

Malone reads *disjunct* instead of *distinct*. In the *Bondman of Massinger* we have a passage evidently copied from this speech of Othello:—

“————— *Let me wear*
Your colors, lady, and though youthful heats,
That look no further than your outward form,
Are long since buried in me, while I live,
I am a constant lover of your mind,” &c.

Mr. Gifford observes, that, “as this shows how Shakspeare’s contemporaries understood the lines, it should, I think, with us be decisive of their meaning.” *Affects* occur incessantly in the sense of passions, affections ; *young affects* are therefore perfectly synonymous with *youthful heats*. Mr. Gifford suggests that Shakspeare may have given *affect* in the singular to correspond with *heat*. Dr. Johnson’s explanation is:—“I ask it not (says Othello) to please appetite or satisfy loose desires, the passions of youth, which I have now outlived, or for any particular gratification of myself, but merely that I may indulge the wishes of my wife.”

² i. e. because.

³ Thus the folio ; except that, instead of *active instruments*, it has *officed instrument*. The quarto reads “And feathered Cupid foils,” &c. *Speculative instruments*, in Shakspeare’s language, are the *eyes* ; and *active instruments*, the *hands and feet*. To *seel* is to *close up*. The meaning of the passage appears to be, “When the pleasures and idle toys of love make me unfit either for seeing the duties of my office, or for the ready performance of them.”

⁴ The quarto reads *reputation*.

Othello, leave some officer behind,
And he shall our commission bring to you ;
With such things else of quality and respect,
As doth import you.

Oth. Please your grace, my ancient ;
A man he is of honesty and trust ;
To his conveyance I assign my wife,
With what else needful your good grace shall think
To be sent after me.

Duke. Let it be so.—
Good night to every one.—And, noble seignior,
[*To BRABANTIO.*

If virtue no delighted¹ beauty lack,
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

1 Sen. Adieu, brave Moor ! use Desdemona well.

Bra. Look to her, Moor ; have a quick eye to see ;
She has deceived her father, and may thee.

[*Exeunt Duke, Senators, Officers, &c.*

Oth. My life upon her faith.—Honest Iago,
My Desdemona must I leave to thee.
I pr'ythee, let thy wife attend on her ;
And bring them after in the best advantage.²
Come, Desdemona ; I have but an hour
Of love, of worldly matters and direction,
To spend with thee ; we must obey the time.

[*Exeunt OTHELLO and DESDEMONA.*

Rod. Iago—

Iago. What say'st thou, noble heart ?

Rod. What will I do, thinkest thou ?

Iago. Why, go to bed, and sleep.

Rod. I will incontinently drown myself.

Iago. Well, if thou dost, I shall never love thee
after it. Why, thou silly gentleman !

Rod. It is silliness to live, when to live is a torment ;
and then have we a prescription to die, when death is
our physician.

Iago. O, villanous ! I have looked upon the world

¹ *Delighted* for *delighting*.

² i. e. fairest opportunity.

for four times seven years!¹ and since I could distinguish between a benefit and an injury, I never found a man that knew how to love himself. Ere I would say I would drown myself for the love of a Guinea-hen,² I would change my humanity with a baboon.

Rod. What should I do? I confess it is my shame to be so fond; but it is not in virtue to amend it.

Iago. Virtue? a fig! 'tis in ourselves, that we are thus, or thus. Our bodies are our gardens; to the which, our wills are gardeners: so that if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce; set hyssop, and weed up thyme; supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with many; either to have it sterile with idleness, or manured with industry; why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance³ of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions. But we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts; whereof I take this, that you call—love, to be a sect,⁴ or scion.

Rod. It cannot be.

Iago. It is merely a lust of the blood, and a permission of the will. Come, be a man; drown thyself! drown cats, and blind puppies. I have professed me thy friend, and I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness; I could never better stead thee than now. Put money in thy purse; follow these wars; defeat thy favor with an usurped beard;⁵ I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be, that Desdemona should long continue her love to the Moor,—put money in thy purse;—nor he his to her. It was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an an-

¹ In the novel, on which Othello is founded, Iago is described as a young, handsome man.

² A Guinea-hen was a cant term for a woman of easy virtue.

³ The folio reads "if the brain;" probably a mistake for beam.

⁴ A sect is what the gardeners call a cutting. The modern editors read a set.

⁵ Defeat was used for disfigurement or alteration of features; from the French *défaire*. Favor means that combination of features which gives the face its distinguishing character.

swerable sequestration;¹—put but money in thy purse.—These Moors are changeable in their wills:—fill thy purse with money; the food that to him now is as luscious as locusts, shall be to him shortly as bitter as coloquintida.² She must change for youth; when she is sated with his body, she will find the error of her choice.—She must have change, she must; therefore put money in thy purse.—If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning. Make all the money thou canst. If sanctimony and a frail vow, betwixt an erring³ barbarian and a super-subtle Venetian, be not too hard for my wits, and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her; therefore make money. A pox of drowning thyself! it is clean out of the way; seek thou rather to be hanged in compassing thy joy, than to be drowned and go without her.

Rod. Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, if I depend on the issue?

Iago. Thou art sure of me.—Go, make money;—I have told thee often, and I retell thee again and again, I hate the Moor. My cause is hearted;⁴ thine hath no less reason. Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him; if thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, and me a sport. There are many events in the womb of time, which will be delivered. Traverse;⁵ go; provide thy money. We will have more of this to-morrow.—Adieu.

Rod. Where shall we meet i' the morning?

Iago. At my lodging.

Rod. I'll be with thee betimes.

Iago. Go to; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo?

Rod. What say you?

Iago. No more of drowning; do you hear?

Rod. I am changed. I'll sell all my land.

¹ *Sequestration* is defined to be "a putting apart, a separation of a thing from the possession of those that contend for it."

² The quarto reads "as *acerb* as coloquintida."

³ *Erring* is the same as *erraticus* in Latin.

⁴ This adjective occurs again in Act iii. :—"hearted throne."

⁵ i. e. *march*.

Iago. Go to; farewell; put money enough in your purse.

[*Exit* RODERIGO.]

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse;
 For I mine own gained knowledge should profane,
 If I would time expend with such a snipe,
 But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor;
 And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets
 He has done my office. I know not if't be true;
 But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
 Will do, as if for surety.¹ He holds me well;
 The better shall my purpose work on him.
 Cassio's a proper man. Let me see now;
 To get his place, and to plume² up my will;
 A double knavery,—How? how?—Let me see.—
 After some time, to abuse Othello's ear,
 That he is too familiar with his wife.—
 He hath a person; and a smooth dispose
 To be suspected; framed to make women false.
 The Moor is of a free and open nature,
 That thinks men honest, that but seem to be so;
 And will as tenderly be led by the nose,
 As asses are.
 I have't;—it is engendered.—Hell and night
 Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.
 [*Exit.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A Seaport town in Cyprus. A Platform.*

Enter MONTANO and Two Gentlemen.

Mon. What from the cape can you discern at sea?

1 Gent. Nothing at all. It is a high-wrought flood;

¹ That is, I will act as if I were certain of the fact. "He *holds me well*," is, he entertains a good opinion of me.

² The first quarto reads "to *make up*."

I cannot, 'twixt the heaven¹ and the main,
Descry a sail.

Mon. Methinks the wind hath spoke aloud at land;
A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements.
If it hath ruffianed so upon the sea,
What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them,²
Can hold the mortise? what shall we hear of this?

2 Gent. A segregation of the Turkish fleet.
For do but stand upon the foaming shore,³
The chiding billow seems to pelt the clouds;
The wind-shaked surge, with high and monstrous main,
Seems to cast water on the burning bear,⁴
And quench the guards of the ever-fixed pole.
I never did like molestation view
On the enchafed flood.

Mon. If that the Turkish fleet
Be not ensheltered and embayed, they are drowned;
It is impossible they bear it out.

Enter a third Gentleman.

3 Gent. News, lords! our wars are done;
The desperate tempest hath so banged the Turks,
That their designment halts. A noble ship of Venice
Hath seen a grievous wreck and sufferance
On most part of their fleet.

Mon. How! is this true?

3 Gent. The ship is here put in,
A Veronesé;⁵ Michael Cassio,

¹ The quarto reads:—

“ ——— 'twixt the *haven* and the main; ”

and Malone adopts that reading.

² The quarto of 1622 reads, “when the *huge* mountaine *melt*,” the letter *s*, which, perhaps, belongs to *mountaine*, having wandered, at press, from its place. In *Troilus and Cressida* we have:—

“The strong-ribbed bark through *liquid mountains* cuts.”

³ The elder quarto reads “the *banning* shore.”

⁴ The constellation near the polar star. The next line alludes to the star *Arctophylax*, which literally signifies the guard of the bear. The 4to. 1622 reads “ever-fired pole.”

⁵ The old copy reads “a *Veronessa*;” whether this signified a ship fitted out by the people of Verona, who were tributary to the Venetian republic, or designated some particular kind of vessel, is not yet established.

Lieutenant to the warlike Moor, Othello,
Is come on shore ; the Moor himself's at sea,
And is in full commission here for Cyprus.

Mon. I am glad on't ; 'tis a worthy governor.

3 Gent. But this same Cassio,—though he speak of
comfort,
Touching the Turkish loss,—yet he looks sadly,
And prays the Moor be safe ; for they were parted
With foul and violent tempest.

Mon. 'Pray Heaven, he be ;
For I have served him, and the man commands
Like a full ¹ soldier. Let's to the seaside, ho !
As well to see the vessel that's come in,
As to throw out our eyes for brave Othello ;
Even till we make the main, and the aerial blue,
An indistinct regard.

3 Gent. Come, let's do so ;
For every minute is expectancy
Of more arrivance.

Enter CASSIO.

Cas. Thanks to the valiant of this warlike isle,
That so approve the Moor. O, let the Heavens
Give him defence against the elements,
For I have lost him on a dangerous sea !

Mon. Is he well shipped ?

Cas. His bark is stoutly timbered, and his pilot
Of very expert and approved allowance ; ²
Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,
Stand in bold cure. ³

[*Within.*] A sail, a sail, a sail !

Enter another Gentleman.

Cas. What noise ?

4 Gent. The town is empty ; on the brow o' the sea
Stand ranks of people, and they cry—*A sail.*

¹ A full soldier is a complete one. See Act i. Sc. 1.

² i. e. of allowed and approved expertness.

³ Stand in confidence of being cured.

Cas. My hopes do shape him for the governor.

2 Gent. They do discharge their shot of courtesy ;
[*Guns heard.*

Our friends, at least.

Cas. I pray you, sir, go forth,
And give us truth who 'tis that is arrived.

2 Gent. I shall. [*Exit.*

Mon. But, good lieutenant, is your general wived ?

Cas. Most fortunately. He hath achieved a maid
That paragon's description, and wild fame ;
One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,
And in the essential vesture of creation,
Does bear all excellency.¹—How now ? who has
put in ?

Re-enter second Gentleman.

2 Gent. 'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general.

Cas. He has had most favorable and happy speed.
Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,
The guttered rocks, and congregated sands,—
Traitors ensteeped² to clog the guiltless keel,
As having sense of beauty, do omit
Their mortal³ natures, letting go safely by
The divine Desdemona.

Mon. What is she ?

Cas. She that I spake of, our great captain's
captain,
Left in the conduct of the bold Iago ;
Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts,
A se'nnight's speed.—Great Jove, Othello guard,
And swell his sail with thine own powerful breath ;
That he may bless this bay with his tall ship,

¹ This is the reading of the quartos : the folio has :—

“ And in the *essential vesture of creation*
Do's tyre the Ingeniuer.”

If the reading of the folio be adopted, the meaning would be this :—She is one who excels all description ; and, in real beauty, or outward form, goes beyond the power of the inventive pencil of the artist.

² “ Traitors *ensteeped* ” are merely traitors concealed under the water.

³ *Deadly, destructive.*

Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms,
Give renewed fire to our extincted spirits,
And bring all Cyprus comfort!—O, behold,

Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, IAGO, RODERIGO, *and*
Attendants.

The riches of the ship is come on shore!¹
Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees.—
Hail to thee, lady! and the grace of Heaven,
Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
Enwheel thee round!

Des. I thank you, valiant Cassio.
What tidings can you tell me of my lord?

Cas. He is not yet arrived; nor know I aught
But that he's well, and will be shortly here.

Des. O, but I fear;—How lost you company?

Cas. The great contention of the sea and skies
Parted our fellowship. But, hark! a sail.

[*Cry within, A sail, a sail! then guns heard.*

2 Gent. They give their greeting to the citadel;
This likewise is a friend.

Cas. See for the news.²—

[*Exit Gentleman.*

Good ancient, you are welcome;—welcome, mis-
tress.—

[*To EMILIA.*

Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,
That I extend my manners; 'tis my breeding
That gives me this bold show of courtesy.

[*Kissing her.*

Iago. Sir, would she give you so much of her lips
As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,
You'd have enough.

Des. Alas, she has no speech.

Iago. In faith, too much;
I find it still, when I have list to sleep.
Marry, before your ladyship, I grant,

¹ Shakspeare uses *riches* as a singular, in his eighty-seventh sonnet.

² The first quarto reads, "So speaks this voice."

She puts her tongue a little in her heart,
And chides with thinking.

Emil. You have little cause to say so.

Iago. Come on, come on ; you are pictures out of doors,

Bells in your parlors, wild-cats in your kitchens,
Saints in your injuries,¹ devils being offended,
Players in your housewifery, and housewives in your beds.

Des. O, fie upon thee, slanderer !

Iago. Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk ;
You rise to play, and go to bed to work.

Emil. You shall not write my praise.

Iago. No, let me not.

Des. What wouldst thou write of me, if thou shouldst praise me ?

Iago. O gentle lady, do not put me to't ;
For I am nothing, if not critical.²

Des. Come on, assay ;—there's one gone to the harbor ?

Iago. Ay, madam.

Des. I am not merry ; but I do beguile
The thing I am, by seeming otherwise.—
Come, how wouldst thou praise me ?

Iago. I am about it ; but, indeed, my invention
Comes from my pate, as birdlime does from frize,
It plucks it out brains and all. But my muse labors,
And thus she is delivered :—

If she be fair and wise,—fairness, and wit,
The one's for use, the other useth it.

Des. Well praised ! How if she be black and witty ?

Iago. If she be black, and thereto have a wit,
She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit.³

Des. Worse and worse.

Emil. How, if fair and foolish ?

Iago. She never yet was foolish that was fair,
For even her folly helped her to an heir.

¹ That is, When you have a mind to do injuries, you put on an air of sanctity.

² i. e. censorious.

³ The quarto reads *hit*.

Des. These are old, fond paradoxes, to make fools laugh i' the alehouse. What miserable praise hast thou for her that's foul and foolish?

Iago. There's none so foul, and foolish thereunto, But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do.

Des. O heavy ignorance!—thou praisest the worst best. But what praise couldst thou bestow on a deserving woman indeed! one, that, in the authority of her merit, did justly put on the vouch of very malice itself?¹

Iago. She that was ever fair, and never proud;
Had tongue at will, and yet was never loud;
Never lacked gold, and yet went never gay;
Fled from her wish, and yet said,—*Now I may*;
She that, being angered, her revenge being nigh,
Bade her wrong stay, and her displeasure fly;
She, that in wisdom never was so frail,
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail;²
She that could think, and ne'er disclose her mind,
See suitors following, and not look behind;
She was a wight,—if ever such wight were,—

Des. To do what?

Iago. To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer.³

Des. O, most lame and impotent conclusion!—Do not learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy husband.—How say you, Cassio? is he not a most profane and liberal⁴ counsellor?

Cas. He speaks home, madam; you may relish him more in the soldier, than in the scholar.

Iago. [*Aside.*] He takes her by the palm. Ay, well said, whisper; with as little a web as this, will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do; I will gyve⁵ thee in thine own courtship. You

¹ The sense is this—one that was so conscious of her own merit, and of the authority her character had with every one, that she durst call upon malice itself to vouch for her. To *put on* is to provoke, to incite.

² That is, to exchange a delicacy for coarser fare. See Queen Elizabeth's Household Book for the forty-third year of her reign:—"Item, the master cookes have to fee all the *salmons' tails*," &c. p. 206.

³ i. e. "to suckle children and keep the accounts of the household."

⁴ *Liberal* is *licentious*.

⁵ To *gyve* is to *fetter*, to *shackle*. The first quarto reads, "I will catch

say true ; 'tis so, indeed. If such tricks as these strip you out of your lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kissed your three fingers so oft, which now again you are most apt to play the sir in. Very good ; well kissed ! an excellent courtesy ! 'tis so, indeed. Yet again your fingers to your lips ? 'would they were clyster-pipes for your sake !——[*Trumpet.*] The Moor—I know his trumpet.

Cas. 'Tis truly so.

Des. Let's meet him, and receive him.

Cas. Lo, where he comes !

•
Enter OTHELLO, and Attendants.

Oth. O my fair warrior !

Des. My dear Othello !

Oth. It gives me wonder, great as my content,
To see you here before me. O my soul's joy !

If after every tempest come such calms,
May the winds blow till they have wakened death !
And let the laboring bark climb hills of seas,
Olympus-high ; and duck again as low
As hell's from heaven ! If it were now to die,
'Twere now to be most happy ; for, I fear,
My soul hath her content so absolute,
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.

Des. The Heavens forbid
But that our loves and comforts should increase,
Even as our days do grow !

Oth. Amen to that, sweet powers !—

I cannot speak enough of this content ;

It stops me here ; it is too much of joy.

And this, and this, the greatest discords be,

[*Kissing her.*

That e'er our hearts shall make !

Iago.

O, you are well tuned now !

you in your own *courtesies*." *Courtship* is the same as *courtesy*, i. e. complimentary or courtly behavior. *To play the sir*, is to show good breeding and gallantry.

But I'll set down the pegs that make this music.

As honest as I am.

[*Aside.*]

Oth.

Come, let's to the castle.—

News, friends; our wars are done; the Turks are drowned.

How do our old acquaintance of this isle?—

Honey, you shall be well desired¹ in Cyprus;

I have found great love amongst them. O my sweet,

I prattle out of fashion,² and I dote

In mine own comforts.—I pr'ythee, good Iago,

Go to the bay, and disembark my coffers.

Bring thou the master to the citadel;

He is a good one, and his worthiness

Does challenge much respect.—Come, Desdemona;

Once more, well met at Cyprus.

[*Exeunt* OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and Attendants.]

Iago. Do thou meet me presently at the harbor. Come hither. If thou be'st valiant,—as (they say) base men, being in love, have then a nobility in their natures more than is native to them,—list me. The lieutenant to-night watches on the court of guard.³—First, I must tell thee this—Desdemona is directly in love with him.

Rod. With him! why, 'tis not possible.

Iago. Lay thy finger—thus,⁴ and let thy soul be instructed. Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor, but for bragging, and telling her fantastical lies; and will she love him still for prating? Let not thy discreet heart think it. Her eye must be fed; and what delight shall she have to look on the devil? When the blood is made dull with the act of sport, there should be—again to inflame it, and to give satiety a fresh appetite—loveliness in favor; sympathy in years, manners, and beauties; all which the Moor is defective in. Now, for want of these required conveniences, her delicate tenderness will find itself abused,

¹ i. e. much solicited by invitation.

² Out of method, without any settled order of discourse.

³ That is, the place where the guard musters.

⁴ On thy mouth to stop it, while thou art listening to a wiser man.

begin to heave the gorge, disrelish and abhor the Moor ; very nature will instruct her in it, and compel her to some second choice. Now, sir, this granted, (as it is a most pregnant and unforced position,) who stands so eminently in the degree of this fortune, as Cassio does ? a knave very voluble ; no further conscionable, than in putting on the mere form of civil and humane seeming, for the better compassing of his salt and most hidden, loose affection ? Why, none ; why, none. A slippery and subtle knave : a finder out of occasions ; that has an eye can stamp and counterfeit advantages, though true advantage never present itself : a devilish knave ! besides, the knave is handsome, young ; and hath all those requisites in him, that folly and green minds¹ look after : a pestilent, complete knave ; and the woman hath found him already.

Rod. I cannot believe that in her ; she is full of most blessed condition.²

Iago. Blessed fig's end ! the wine she drinks is made of grapes ; if she had been blessed, she would never have loved the Moor. Blessed pudding ! Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand ? didst not mark that ?

Rod. Yes, that I did ; but that was but courtesy.

Iago. Lechery, by this hand ; an index,³ and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foul thoughts. They met so near with their lips, that their breaths embraced together. Villanous thoughts, Roderigo ! when these mutualities so marshal the way, hard at hand comes the master and main exercise, the incorporate conclusion. Pish !—But, sir, be you ruled by me. I have brought you from Venice. Watch you to-night ; for the command, I'll lay't upon you. Cassio knows you not ;—I'll not be far from you. Do you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud, or tainting⁴ his discipline ; or from what other

¹ Minds unripe, minds not yet fully formed.

² Qualities, disposition of mind.

³ *Indexes* were formerly *prefixed* to books.

⁴ Throwing a slur upon his discipline.

course you please, which the time shall more favorably minister.

Rod. Well.

Iago. Sir, he is rash, and very sudden¹ in choler; and, haply, with his truncheon may strike at you. Provoke him, that he may; for, even out of that, will I cause these of Cyprus to mutiny; whose qualification² shall come into no true taste again, but by the displanting of Cassio. So shall you have a shorter journey to your desires, by the means I shall then have to prefer³ them; and the impediment most profitably removed, without the which there were no expectation of our prosperity.

Rod. I will do this, if I can bring it to any opportunity.

Iago. I warrant thee. Meet me by and by at the citadel; I must fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.

Rod. Adieu.

[*Exit.*]

Iago. That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it; That she loves him, 'tis apt, and of great credit. The Moor—howbeit that I endure him not— Is of a constant, loving, noble nature; And, I dare think, he'll prove to Desdemona A most dear husband. Now I do love her too; Not out of absolute lust, (though, peradventure, I stand accountant for as great a sin,) But partly led to diet my revenge, For that I do suspect the lusty Moor Hath leaped into my seat; the thought whereof Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards; And nothing can or shall content my soul, Till I am even⁴ with him, wife for wife; Or, failing so, yet that I put the Moor At least into a jealousy so strong That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do,—

¹ *Sudden* is precipitately violent.

² *Qualification*, in our old writers, signifies *appeasement*, *pacification*, *assuagement of anger*.

³ To advance them.

⁴ Thus the quarto 1622; the folio—till I am *evened* with him.

If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trace¹
 For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,
 I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip;
 Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb,²
 For I fear Cassio with my nightcap too;
 Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me,
 For making him egregiously an ass,
 And practising upon his peace and quiet,
 Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confused;
 Knavery's plain face is never seen, till used. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II. *A Street.*

Enter a Herald, with a proclamation; People following.

Her. It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general, that, upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the mere³ perdition of the Turkish fleet, every man put himself into triumph; some to dance, some to make bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his addiction leads him; for, besides these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his nuptials. So much was his pleasure should be proclaimed. All offices⁴ are open; and there is full liberty of feasting, from this present hour of five, till the bell hath told eleven. Heaven bless the isle of Cyprus, and our noble general, Othello!
 [*Exeunt.*]

¹ "If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trace
 For his quick hunting, bear the putting on," &c.

This is the reading of the folio; the quarto of 1622 reads *crush*, which the commentators altered to *trash*, signifying to *impede*, to *keep back*; a meaning the very converse of that required by the context: to *trace* means neither more nor less than to *follow*, the appropriate hunting term; the old French *tracer*, *tracher*, *trasser*, and the Italian *tracciare*, having the same meaning.

² "In the rank garb," is "in the right down or straight forward fashion." The folio reads "in the right garb."

³ *Mere* is entire.

⁴ All rooms or places in the castle, at which refreshments are prepared or served out.

SCENE III. *A Hall in the Castle.*

Enter OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and Attendants.

Oth. Good Michael, look you to the guard to-night.
Let's teach ourselves that honorable stop,
Not to outsport discretion.

Cas. Iago hath direction what to do;
But, notwithstanding, with my personal eye
Will I look to't.

Oth. Iago is most honest.
Michael, good night; to-morrow, with our earliest,
Let me have speech with you.—Come, my dear love,
The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue;
[*To DESDEMONA.*

That profit's yet to come 'twixt me and you.—
Good night. [*Exeunt* OTH., DES., and Attend.]

Enter IAGO.

Cas. Welcome, Iago; we must to the watch.

Iago. Not this hour, lieutenant; 'tis not yet ten o'clock. Our general cast¹ us thus early, for the love of his Desdemona; whom let us not therefore blame; he hath not yet made wanton the night with her; and she is sport for Jove.

Cas. She's a most exquisite lady.

Iago. And, I'll warrant her, full of game.

Cas. Indeed, she is a most fresh and delicate creature.

Iago. What an eye she has! Methinks it sounds a parley of provocation.

Cas. An inviting eye; and yet, methinks, right modest.

Iago. And, when she speaks, is it not an alarm to love?

Cas. She is, indeed, perfection.

¹ i. e. dismissed us.

Iago. Well, happiness to their sheets! Come, lieutenant, I have a stoup of wine; and here without are a brace of Cyprus gallants, that would fain have a measure to the health of black Othello.

Cas. Not to-night, good Iago; I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking. I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment.

Iago. O, they are our friends. But one cup; I'll drink for you.

Cas. I have drunk but one cup to-night, and that was craftily qualified¹ too, and, behold, what innovation it makes here. I am unfortunate in the infirmity, and dare not task my weakness with any more.

Iago. What, man! 'tis a night of revels; the gallants desire it.

Cas. Where are they?

Iago. Here at the door; I pray you, call them in.

Cas. I'll do't; but it dislikes me. [*Exit CASSIO.*]

Iago. If I can fasten but one cup upon him,
With that which he hath drunk to-night already,
He'll be as full of quarrel and offence
As my young mistress' dog. Now, my sick fool,
Roderigo,

Whom love has turned almost the wrong side outward,

To Desdemona hath to-night caroused

Potations pottle deep; and he's to watch.

Three lads of Cyprus,—noble swelling spirits,

That hold their honors in a wary distance,

The very elements of this warlike isle,²

Have I to-night flustered with flowing cups,

And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of drunkards,

Am I to put our Cassio in some action

That may offend the isle.—But here they come:

¹ Slyly mixed with water.

² "As quarrelsome as the *discordia semina rerum*; as quick in opposition as fire and water."

If consequence do but approve my dream,¹
My boat sails freely, both with wind and stream.

Re-enter CASSIO, with him MONTANO, and Gentlemen.

Cas. 'Fore Heaven, they have given me a rouse² already.

Mon. Good faith, a little one; not past a pint, as I am a soldier.

Iago. Some wine, ho!

And let me the canakin clink, clink; [Sings.

And let me the canakin clink:

A soldier's a man;

A life's but a span;

Why, then, let a soldier drink.

Some wine, boys!

[*Wine brought in.*

Cas. 'Fore Heaven, an excellent song.

Iago. I learned it in England, where (indeed) they are most potent in potting. Your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied Hollander,—drink, ho!—are nothing to your English.

Cas. Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking?³

Iago. Why, he drinks you, with facility, your Dane dead drunk; he sweats not to overthrow your Almain; he gives your Hollander a vomit, ere the next pottle can be filled.

Cas. To the health of our general.

Mon. I am for it, lieutenant; and I'll do you justice.⁴

Iago. O, sweet England!

King Stephen was a worthy peer,

His breeches cost him but a crown;

He held them sixpence all too dear,

With that he called the tailor—lown.

¹ Every scheme subsisting only in the imagination may be termed a dream.

² See Hamlet, Act i. Sc. 2, note 1, p. 264.

³ Thus the quarto 1622. The folio has *exquisite*.

⁴ i. e. drink as much as you do.

*He was a wight of high renown,
And thou art but of low degree ;
'Tis pride that pulls the country down ;
Then take thine auld cloak about thee.*

Some wine, ho !

Cas. Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

Iago. Will you hear it again ?

Cas. No ; for I hold him to be unworthy of his place, that does those things.—Well,—Heaven's above all ; and there be souls that must be saved, and there be souls must not be saved.

Iago. It's true, good lieutenant.

Cas. For mine own part,—no offence to the general, or any man of quality,—I hope to be saved.

Iago. And so do I too, lieutenant.

Cas. Ay, but, by your leave, not before me ; the lieutenant is to be saved before the ancient. Let's have no more of this ; let's to our affairs.—Forgive us our sins !—Gentlemen, let's look to our business. Do not think, gentlemen, I am drunk ; this is my ancient ;—this is my right hand, and this is my left hand.—I am not drunk now ; I can stand well enough, and speak well enough.

All. Excellent well.

Cas. Why, very well, then ; you must not think, then, that I am drunk. *[Exit.]*

Mon. To the platform, masters ; come, let's set the watch.

Iago. You see this fellow, that is gone before.—
He is a soldier, fit to stand by Cæsar
And give direction ; and do but see his vice ;
'Tis to his virtue a just equinox,
The one as long as the other ; 'tis pity of him.
I fear the trust Othello puts him in,
On some odd time of his infirmity
Will shake this island.

Mon. But is he often thus ?

Iago. 'Tis evermore the prologue to his sleep.

He'll watch the horologe a double set,¹
If drink rock not his cradle.

Mon. It were well
The general were put in mind of it.
Perhaps he sees it not; or his good nature
Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio,
And looks not on his evils. Is not this true?

Enter RODERIGO.

Iago. How now, Roderigo? [*Aside.*
I pray you, after the lieutenant; go. [*Exit RODERIGO.*

Mon. And 'tis great pity, that the noble Moor
Should hazard such a place, as his own second,
With one of an ingraft² infirmity;
It were an honest action to say
So to the Moor.

Iago. Not I, for this fair island.
I do love Cassio well; and would do much
To cure him of this evil. But hark! what noise?
[*Cry within—Help! help!*

Re-enter CASSIO, driving in RODERIGO.

Cas. You rogue! you rascal!

Mon. What's the matter, lieutenant?

Cas. A knave!—teach me my duty!
I'll beat the knave into a twiggen³ bottle.

Rod. Beat me!

Cas. Dost thou prate, rogue?

Mon. [*Striking RODERIGO.*
Nay, good lieutenant;
[*Staying him.*

I pray you, sir, hold your hand.

Cas. Let me go, sir,
Or I'll knock you o'er the mazzard.

¹ If he have no drink, he'll keep awake while the clock strikes two rounds, or four-and-twenty hours.—The word *horologe* is familiar to most of our ancient writers.

² Rooted, settled. ³ i. e. a *wickered* bottle; and so the quarto reads.

Mon. Come, come, you're drunk.

Cas. Drunk ! [*They fight.*

Iago. Away, I say ! go out, and cry—*A mutiny.*
[*Aside to Rod., who goes out.*

Nay, good lieutenant,—alas, gentlemen,—

Help, ho!—Lieutenant,—sir,—Montano,—sir ;—

Help, masters !—Here's a goodly watch, indeed !

[*Bell rings.*

Who's that that rings the bell ?—Diablo, ho !

The town will rise ; God's will, lieutenant ! hold ;

You will be shamed forever.

Enter OTHELLO and Attendants.

Oth. What is the matter here ?

Mon. I bleed still ; I am hurt to the death ;—he dies.¹

Oth. Hold, for your lives.

Iago. Hold, hold, lieutenant, sir, Montano,—gentlemen,—

Have you forgot all sense of place and duty ?

Hold, hold ! the general speaks to you ; hold, for shame !

Oth. Why, how now, ho ! from whence ariseth this ?
 Are we turned Turks ; and to ourselves do that,
 Which Heaven hath forbid the Ottomites ?

For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl.

He that stirs next to carve for his own rage,
 Holds his soul light ; he dies upon his motion.—

Silence that dreadful bell ; it frights the isle

From her propriety.—What is the matter, masters ?

Honest Iago, that look'st dead with grieving,

Speak, who began this ? on thy love, I charge thee.

Iago. I do not know ;—friends all but now, even now,
 In quarter,² and in terms like bride and groom

¹ The first quarto omits the words *he dies*, and has *zounds!* at the commencement of the line. Montano may be supposed to say *he dies*, i. e. *he shall die*. Othello, in the very next speech, says, *He dies* upon his motion."

² i. e. on our station. This seems the leading signification, for the principal camp-guard of a regiment is called the *quarter-guard* ; but a regiment in quarters has no such guard.

Divesting them for bed ; and then, but now,
 (As if some planet had unwitting men,)
 Swords out, and tilting one at other's breast,
 In opposition bloody. I cannot speak
 Any beginning to this peevish odds ;
 And 'would in action glorious I had lost
 These legs, that brought me to a part of it !

Oth. How comes it, Michael, you are thus forgot ?¹

Cas. I pray you, pardon me, I cannot speak.

Oth. Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil ;
 The gravity and stillness of your youth
 The world hath noted, and your name is great
 In mouths of wisest censure. What's the matter,
 That you unlace your reputation thus,
 And spend your rich opinion,² for the name
 Of a night brawler ? Give me answer to it.

Mon. Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger.
 Your officer, Iago, can inform you—
 While I spare speech, (which something now offends
 me)—

Of all that I do know : nor know I aught
 By me that's said or done amiss this night ;
 Unless self-charity³ be sometime a vice ;
 And to defend ourselves it be a sin,
 When violence assails us.

Oth. Now, by Heaven,
 My blood begins my safer guides to rule ;
 And passion, having my best judgment collied,⁴
 Assays to lead the way. If I once stir,
 Or do but lift this arm, the best of you
 Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know
 How this foul rout began, who set it on ;
 And he that is approved⁵ in this offence,
 Though he had twinned with me, both at a birth,
 Shall lose me.—What ! in a town of war,

¹ i. e. you have thus forgot yourself.

² Character.

³ Care of one's self.

⁴ *Collied* is *blackened*, as with smut or coal ; and, figuratively, means here *obscured, darkened*.

⁵ Convicted by proof.

Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,
To manage private and domestic quarrel,
In night, and on the court of guard and safety! ¹
'Tis monstrous.—Iago, who began it?

Mon. If partially affined,² or leagued in office,
Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,
Thou art no soldier.

Iago. Touch me not so near.
I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth,
Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio;
Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth
Shall nothing wrong him.—Thus it is, general.
Montano and myself being in speech,
There comes a fellow, crying out for help;
And Cassio following with determined sword,³
To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman
Steps in to Cassio, and entreats his pause;
Myself the crying fellow did pursue,
Lest, by his clamor, (as it so fell out,)
The town might fall in fright. He, swift of foot,
Outran my purpose; and I returned the rather
For that I heard the clink and fall of swords,
And Cassio high in oath; which, till to-night,
I ne'er might say before. When I came back
(For this was brief) I found them close together,
At blow, and thrust; even as again they were,
When you yourself did part them.
More of this matter can I not report;—
But men are men; the best sometimes forget.—
Though Cassio did some little wrong to him,—
As men in rage strike those that wish them best,—
Yet, surely, Cassio, I believe, received,
From him that fled, some strange indignity,
Which patience could not pass.

¹ The old copies read:—

“In night, and on the court *and* guard of safety.”

Malone made the necessary transposition.

² *Affined* is “bound by proximity of relationship;” but here it means
“related by nearness of office.”

³ The old copy reads:—

“And Cassio following *him* with determined sword.”

Oth. I know, Iago,
Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,
Making it light to Cassio.—Cassio, I love thee;
But never more be officer of mine.—

Enter DESDEMONA, attended.

Look, if my gentle love be not raised up;—
I'll make thee an example.

Des. What's the matter, dear?

Oth. All's well now, sweeting; come away to bed.
Sir, for your hurts,
Myself will be your surgeon;—Lead him off.¹
[*To MONTANO, who is led off.*

Iago, look with care about the town;
And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted.—
Come, Desdemona; 'tis the soldiers' life,
To have their balmy slumbers waked with strife.

[*Exeunt all but IAGO and CASSIO.*

Iago. What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

Cas. Ay, past all surgery.

Iago. Marry, Heaven forbid!

Cas. Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have
lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part, sir,
of myself, and what remains is bestial.—My reputation,
Iago, my reputation.

Iago. As I am an honest man, I thought you had
received some bodily wound; there is more offence
in that, than in reputation. Reputation is an idle and
most false imposition; oft got without merit, and lost
without deserving. You have lost no reputation at all,
unless you repute yourself such a loser. What, man!
there are ways to recover the general again. You
are but now cast in his mood,² a punishment more in
policy than in malice; even so as one would beat his

¹ Malone thinks that the words "Lead him off" were originally a marginal stage direction, as it was common to express them in imperative terms:—"Play music.—Ring the bell.—Lead him off," &c.

² Thrown off, dismissed in his anger.

offenceless dog, to affright an imperious lion. Sue to him again, and he's yours.

Cas. I will rather sue to be despised, than to deceive so good a commander, with so slight, so drunken, and so indiscreet an officer. Drunk? and speak parrot?¹ and squabble? swagger? swear? and discourse fustian with one's own shadow?—O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee—devil!

Iago. What was he that you followed with your sword? What had he done to you?

Cas. I know not.

Iago. Is it possible?

Cas. I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly; a quarrel, but nothing wherefore.—O that men should put an enemy in their mouths, to steal away their brains! that we should, with joy, revel, pleasure, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts!

Iago. Why, but you are now well enough. How came you thus recovered?

Cas. It hath pleased the devil, drunkenness, to give place to the devil, wrath; one unperfectness shows me another, to make me frankly despise myself.

Iago. Come, you are too severe a moraler. As the time, the place, and the condition of this country stands, I could heartily wish this had not befallen; but, since it is as it is, mend it for your own good.

Cas. I will ask him for my place again; he shall tell me I am a drunkard! Had I as many mouths as Hydra, such an answer would stop them all. To be now a sensible man, by and by a fool, and presently a beast! O, strange!—Every inordinate cup is unblessed, and the ingredient is a devil.

Iago. Come, come, good wine is a familiar good creature, if it be well used; exclaim no more against it. And, good lieutenant, I think, you think I love you.

Cas. I have well approved it, sir.—I drunk!

¹ i. e. talk idly, utter all you know. From *Drunk*, &c. to *shadow*, inclusively, is wanting in the quarto 1622.

Iago. You, or any man living, may be drunk at some time, man. I'll tell you what you shall do. Our general's wife is now the general;—I may say so in this respect, for that he hath devoted and given up himself to the contemplation, mark, and denotement¹ of her parts and graces:—Confess yourself freely to her; importune her; she'll help to put you in your place again; she is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, that she holds it a vice in her goodness, not to do more than she is requested. This broken joint² between you and her husband, entreat her to splinter; and, my fortunes against any lay³ worth naming, this crack of your love shall grow stronger than it was before.

Cas. You advise me well.

Iago. I protest, in the sincerity of love, and honest kindness.

Cas. I think it freely; and betimes in the morning, I will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me. I am desperate of my fortunes, if they check me here.

Iago. You are in the right. Good night, lieutenant; I must to the watch.

Cas. Good night, honest Iago. [*Exit CASSIO.*]

Iago. And what's he, then, that says,—I play the villain?

When this advice is free,⁴ I give, and honest,
 Probal to thinking, and (indeed) the course
 To win the Moor again? for, 'tis most easy
 The inclining⁵ Desdemona to subdue
 In any honest suit; she's framed as fruitful⁶
 As the free elements. And then for her
 To win the Moor,—were't to renounce his baptism,
 All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,—

¹ The old copies read *devotement*. Theobald made the correction.

² Thus the folio. The quarto 1622 reads, *this brawl*.

³ Bet or wager.

⁴ i. e. *liberal*; such as honest openness or frank good will would give. There may be such a contraction of the word *probable* as that in the next line, but it has not yet been met with elsewhere.

⁵ *Inclining* here signifies *compliant*.

⁶ Bountiful as the elements, out of which all things were produced.

His soul is so enfettered to her love,
That she may make, unmake, do what she list,
Even as her appetite shall play the god
With his weak function. How am I then a villain,
To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,¹
Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!
When devils will their blackest sins put on,
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
As I do now; for while this honest fool
Plies Desdemona, to repair his fortunes,
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
I'll pour this pestilence² into his ear,—
That she repeals³ him for her body's lust;
And, by how much she strives to do him good,
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
So will I turn her virtue into pitch;
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all.—How now, Roderigo?

Enter RODERIGO.

Rod. I do follow here in the chase, not like a hound that hunts, but one that fills up the cry. My money is almost spent; I have been to-night exceedingly well cudgelled; and, I think, the issue will be—I shall have so much experience for my pains; and so, with no money at all, and a little more wit, return to Venice.

Iago. How poor are they that have not patience!
What wound did ever heal but by degrees?
Thou know'st we work by wit, and not by witchcraft;
And wit depends on dilatory time.
Does't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee,
And thou, by that small hurt, hath cashiered Cassio;
Though other things grow fair against the sun,
Yet fruits that blossom first, will first be ripe.⁴

¹ *Parallel course* for *course* level or even with his design.

² *Pestilence* for *poison*.

³ i. e. *recalls* him, from the Fr. *rappeler*.

⁴ The *blossoming* to which Iago alludes, is the removal of Cassio. There was good ground for expecting that the fruits of it would soon be ripe.

⁴ It was usual for friends to serenade a new-married couple on the morning after the celebration of the marriage, or to greet them with a *morning-song* to bid them good-morrow.

1 *Mus.* Whereby hangs a tale, sir?

Clo. Marry, sir, by many a wind-instrument that I know. But, masters, here's money for you; and the general so likes your music, that he desires you of all loves,¹ to make no more noise with it.

1 *Mus.* Well, sir, we will not.

Clo. If you have any music that may not be heard, to't again; but, as they say, to hear music, the general does not greatly care.

1 *Mus.* We have none such, sir.

Clo. Then put up your pipes in your bag, for I'll away. Go; vanish into air; away.

[*Exeunt* Musicians.]

Cas. Dost thou hear, my honest friend?

Clo. No, I hear not your honest friend; I hear you.

Cas. Pr'ythee, keep up thy quillet.² There's a poor piece of gold for thee; if the gentlewoman that attends the general's wife be stirring, tell her there's one Cassio entreats her a little favor of speech. Wilt thou do this?

Clo. She is stirring, sir; if she will stir hither, I shall seem to notify unto her. [*Exit.*]

Enter IAGO.

Cas. Do, good my friend.—In happy time, Iago.

Iago. You have not been abed, then?

Cas. Why, no; the day had broke
Before we parted. I have made bold, Iago,
To send in to your wife. My suit to her
Is, that she will to virtuous Desdemona
Procure me some access.

Iago. I'll send her to you presently;
And I'll devise a mean to draw the Moor
Out of the way, that your converse and business
May be more free. [*Exit.*]

Cas. I humbly thank you for't. I never knew
A Florentine more kind and honest.³

¹ i. e. for love's sake. We have this adjuration again in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

² See *Hamlet*, Act v. Sc. i. p. 371.

³ Cassio was, undoubtedly, a Florentine, as appears by the first scene of the play, where he is expressly called one. Iago was a Venetian.

Enter EMILIA.

Emil. Good morrow, good lieutenant ; I am sorry
For your displeasure ;¹ but all will soon be well.
The general, and his wife, are talking of it ;
And she speaks for you stoutly. The Moor replies,
That he you hurt, is of great fame in Cyprus,
And great affinity ; and that, in wholesome wisdom,
He might not but refuse you. But, he protests, he loves
you ;
And needs no other suitor, but his likings,
To take the saf'st occasion by the front,²
To bring you in again.

Cas. Yet, I beseech you,—
If you think fit, or that it may be done,—
Give me advantage of some brief discourse
With Desdemona alone.

Emil. 'Pray you, come in ;
I will bestow you where you shall have time
To speak your bosom freely.

Cas. I am much bound to you.³
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *A Room in the Castle.*

Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Gentlemen.

Oth. These letters give, Iago, to the pilot ;
And, by him, do my duties to the state.⁴
That done, I will be walking on the works ;
Repair there to me.

Iago. Well, my good lord, I'll do't.

Oth. This fortification, gentlemen,—shall we see't ?

Gent. We'll wait upon your lordship. [*Exeunt.*]

Cassio means to say, I never experienced more honesty and kindness even in one of my own countrymen.

¹ i. e. the displeasure you have incurred from Othello.

² This line is wanting in the folio.

³ This speech is omitted in the first quarto.

⁴ Thus the quarto 1622 ; folio, " to the senate."

SCENE III. *Before the Castle.*

Enter DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and EMILIA.

Des. Be thou assured, good Cassio, I will do
All my abilities in thy behalf.

Emil. Good madam, do; I know it grieves my
husband,
As if the case¹ were his.

Des. O, that's an honest fellow.—Do not doubt,
Cassio,
But I will have my lord and you again
As friendly as you were.

Cas. Bounteous madam,
Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio,
He's never any thing but your true servant.

Des. O sir,² I thank you. You do love my lord;
You have known him long; and be you well assured
He shall in strangeness stand no further off
Than in a politic distance.

Cas. Ay, but, lady,
That policy may either last so long,
Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,
Or breed itself so out of circumstance,
That, I being absent, and my place supplied,
My general will forget my love and service.

Des. Do not doubt that; before Emilia here,
I give thee warrant of thy place; assure thee,
If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it
To the last article: my lord shall never rest;
I'll watch him tame,³ and talk him out of patience;
His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift;
I'll intermingle every thing he does
With Cassio's suit. Therefore be merry, Cassio;
For thy solicitor shall rather die,
Than give thy cause away.

¹ Folio reads, "As if the *cause* were his."

² Thus the quarto of 1622. The folio reads, "*I know't*, I thank you."

³ Hawks and other birds are tamed by keeping them from sleep.

Enter OTHELLO and IAGO, at a distance.

Emil. Madam, here comes
My lord.

Cas. Madam, I'll take my leave.

Des. Why, stay,
And hear me speak.

Cas. Madam, not now ; I am very ill at ease ;
Unfit for mine own purposes.

Des. Well, well,
Do your discretion. [*Exit CASSIO.*]

Iago. Ha ! I like not that.

Oth. What dost thou say ?

Iago. Nothing, my lord ; or if—I know not what.

Oth. Was not that Cassio, parted from my wife ?

Iago. Cassio, my lord ? No, sure, I cannot think it,
That he would steal away so guiltylike,
Seeing you coming.

Oth. I do believe 'twas he.

Des. How now, my lord ?
I have been talking with a suitor here,
A man that languishes in your displeasure.

Oth. Who is't you mean ?

Des. Why, your lieutenant, Cassio. Good my lord,
If I have any grace, or power to move you,
His present reconciliation¹ take ;
For, if he be not one that truly loves you,
That errs in ignorance, and not in cunning,²
I have no judgment in an honest face.
I pr'ythee call him back.

Oth. Went he hence now ?

Des. Ay, sooth ; so humbled,
That he hath left part of his grief with me ;
I suffer with him. Good love, call him back.

Oth. Not now, sweet Desdemona ; some other time.

Des. But shall't be shortly ?

Oth. The sooner, sweet, for you.

¹ i. e. "take his present atonement," or submission. The words were formerly synonymous.

² *Cunning* here signifies *knowledge*, the ancient sense of the word.

Des. Shall't be to-night at supper?

Oth. No, not to-night.

Des. To-morrow dinner, then?

Oth. I shall not dine at home;

I meet the captains at the citadel.

Des. Why then, to-morrow night; or Tuesday morn;
Or Tuesday noon, or night; or Wednesday morn.—

I pray thee, name the time; but let it not
Exceed three days. In faith, he's penitent;

And yet his trespass, in our common reason,
(Save that, they say, the wars must make examples
Out of their best,¹) is not almost a fault

To incur a private check. When shall he come?

Tell me, Othello. I wonder in my soul,

What you could ask me, that I should deny,
Or stand so mammering² on. What, Michael Cassio,

That came a wooing with you,³ and so many a time,
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,

Hath ta'en your part; to have so much to do

To bring him in! Trust me, I could do much,—

Oth. 'Pr'ythee, no more. Let him come when he will;
I will deny thee nothing.

Des. Why, this is not a boon;
'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,

Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm;

Or sue to you to do peculiar profit

To your own person. Nay, when I have a suit,

Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,

It shall be full of poize⁴ and difficulty,

And fearful to be granted.

Oth. I will deny thee nothing;
Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this,

To leave me but a little to myself.

Des. Shall I deny you? no. Farewell, my lord.

Oth. Farewell, my Desdemona; I will come to thee
straight.

¹ The severity of military discipline must not spare the *best men* of the army, when their punishment may afford a wholesome *example*.

² So *hesitating*, in such doubtful suspense.

³ See Act i. Sc. 2.

⁴ i. e. of *weight*.

Des. Emilia, come.—Be it as your fancies teach you;
Whate'er you be, I am obedient. [*Exit with EMILIA.*]

Oth. Excellent wretch!¹ Perdition catch my soul,
But I do love thee! and when I love thee not,
Chaos is come again.²

Iago. My noble lord,——

Oth. What dost thou say, Iago?

Iago. Did Michael Cassio, when you wooed my lady,
Know of your love?

Oth. He did, from first to last. Why dost thou ask?

Iago. But for a satisfaction of my thought;
No further harm.

Oth. Why of thy thought, Iago?

Iago. I did not think he had been acquainted with
her.

Oth. O yes; and went between us very oft.

Iago. Indeed?

Oth. Indeed! ay, indeed.—Discern'st thou aught
in that?

Is he not honest?

Iago. Honest, my lord?

Oth. Ay, honest.

Iago. My lord, for aught I know.

Oth. What dost thou think?

Iago. Think, my lord?

Oth. Think, my lord!

By Heaven, he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown.—Thou dost mean something;
I heard thee say but now—Thou lik'dst not that,
When Cassio left my wife. What didst not like?
And, when I told thee, he was of my counsel

¹ "The meaning of the word *wretch* is not generally understood. It is now in some parts of England a term of the fondest and softest tenderness. It expresses the utmost degree of amiableness, joined with an idea, which perhaps all tenderness includes, of feebleness, softness, and want of protection." Sir W. Davenant, in his *Cruel Brother*, uses the word *twice* with the same meaning:—"Excellent *wretch*!" with a timorous modesty she stifeth up her utterance."

² Ere I cease to love thee, the world itself shall be reduced to its primitive chaos.

In my whole course of wooing, thou cry'dst, *Indeed?*
 And didst contract and purse thy brow together,
 As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain
 Some horrible conceit. If thou dost love me,
 Show me thy thought.

Iago.

My lord, you know I love you.

Oth.

I think thou dost ;

And—for I know thou art full of love and honesty,
 And weigh'st thy words before thou giv'st them
 breath—

Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more ;
 For such things, in a false, disloyal knave,
 Are tricks of custom ; but, in a man that's just,
 They are close denotements,¹ working from the heart,
 That passion cannot rule.

Iago.

For Michael Cassio,—

I dare be sworn, I think that he is honest.

Oth. I think so too.

Iago.

Men should be what they seem ;

Or, those that be not, 'would they might seem none!²

Oth. Certain, men should be what they seem.

Iago. Why then, I think Cassio's an honest man.

Oth. Nay, yet there's more in this.

I pray thee, speak to me as to thy thinkings,
 As thou dost ruminate ; and give thy worst of thoughts
 The worst of words.

Iago.

Good my lord, pardon me ;

Though I am bound to every act of duty,

I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.³

Utter my thoughts? Why, say, they are vile and
 false,—

¹ Thus the earliest quarto. The first folio reads—"close *dilations* ;" which Johnson says was intended for "cold *delations*," i. e. *occult and secret accusations, working* involuntarily from the heart. The second folio reads "cold *dilations* ;" which Warburton explains "cold keeping back a secret," which men of phlegmatic constitutions, whose arts are not swayed or governed by their passions, we find can do ; while more sanguine tempers reveal themselves at once, and without reserve." Upton says *dilations* comes from the Latin *dilationes*, delayings, pauses.

² I believe the meaning is, "would they might no longer seem or bear the shape of men."—Johnson.

³ "I am not bound to do that *which* even slaves are not bound to do."

As where's that palace, whereinto foul things
 Sometimes intrude not? Who has a breast so pure,
 But some uncleanly apprehensions
 Keep leets, and law-days, and in session sit
 With meditations lawful?

Oth. Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,
 If thou but think'st him wronged, and mak'st his ear
 A stranger to thy thoughts.

Iago. I do beseech you,—
 Though I, perchance, am vicious in my guess,
 As, I confess, it is my nature's plague
 To spy into abuses; and, oft, my jealousy
 Shapes faults that are not,—I entreat you, then,
 From one that so imperfectly conjects,¹
 You'd take no notice; nor build yourself a trouble
 Out of his scattering and unsure observance.
 It were not for your quiet, nor your good,
 Nor for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom,
 To let you know my thoughts.

Oth. What dost thou mean?

Iago. Good name, in man and woman, dear my lord,
 Is the immediate jewel of their souls.
 Who steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis something,
 nothing.

'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
 But he that filches from me my good name,
 Robs me of that which not enriches him,
 And makes me poor indeed.

Oth. By Heaven, I'll know thy thought.

Iago. You cannot, if my heart were in your hand;
 Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

Oth. Ha!

Iago. O, beware, my lord, of jealousy;
 It is the green-eyed monster, which doth make²

¹ i. e. conjectures. Thus the quarto 1622. The folio reads:—

“—and of my jealousy
 Shapes faults that are not, *that your wisdom,*
 From one that so imperfectly *conceits,*
 Would take no notice.”

² The old copy reads *mock*. The emendation is Hanmer's. The slight alteration of the text renders it more clear and poetical.

The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in bliss,
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;
But, O, what damned minutes tells he o'er,
Who dotes, yet doubts; suspects, yet strongly loves!

Oth. O, misery!

Iago. Poor, and content, is rich, and rich enough;
But riches, fineless,¹ is as poor as winter,
To him that ever fears he shall be poor.—
Good Heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend
From jealousy!

Oth. Why! why is this?
Think'st thou, I'd make a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the moon
With fresh suspicions? No; to be once in doubt,
Is—once to be resolved. Exchange me for a goat,
When I shall turn the business of my soul
To such exsufflicate² and blown surmises,
Matching thy inference.³ 'Tis not to make me jealous,
To say—my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well;
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous;
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
The smallest fear, or doubt of her revolt;
For she had eyes, and chose me. No, Iago;
I'll see, before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;
And, on the proof, there is no more but this,—
Away at once with love, or jealousy.

Iago. I am glad of this, for now I shall have reason
To show the love and duty that I bear you
With franker spirit; therefore, as I am bound,

¹ i. e. endless, unbounded. Warburton observes that this is finely expressed—*winter* producing no fruits.

² No instance of this word has elsewhere occurred. "It seems to me (says Mr. Todd), that all the critics have overlooked the meaning of the passage. *Exsufflicate* may be traced to the low Latin *exsufflare*, to spit down upon, an ancient form of exorcising; and, figuratively, to spit out in abhorrence or contempt. See Du Cange, in v. *exsufflare*. *Exsufflicate* may thus signify *contemptible*; and Othello may be supposed to mean, that he would not change the noble designs, that then employed his thoughts, for *contemptible* and *despicable* surmises."—*Johnson's Dict.* in v. *exsufflate*.

³ i. e. such as you have mentioned in describing the torments of jealousy.

Receive it from me.—I speak not yet of proof.
 Look to your wife ; observe her well with Cassio ;
 Wear your eye—thus, not jealous, nor secure.
 I would not have your free and noble nature,
 Out of self-bounty,¹ be abused ; look to't.
 I know our country disposition well ;
 In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks
 They dare not show their husbands ; their best con-
 science

Is—not to leave undone, but keep unknown.

Oth. Dost thou say so ?

Iago. She did deceive her father, marrying you ;
 And, when she seemed to shake, and fear your looks,
 She loved them most.

Oth. And so she did.

Iago. Why, go to, then ;
 She that, so young, could give out such a seeming,
 To seel her father's eyes up, close as oak,²—
 He thought 'twas witchcraft.—But I am much to
 blame ;

I humbly do beseech you of your pardon,
 For too much loving you.

Oth. I am bound to thee forever.

Iago. I see this hath a little dashed your spirits.

Oth. Not a jot, not a jot.

Iago. Trust me, I fear it has.
 I hope you will consider, what is spoke
 Comes from my love ;—but I do see you are moved.—
 I am to pray you not to strain my speech
 To grosser issues,³ nor to larger reach,
 Than to suspicion.

Oth. I will not.

Iago. Should you do so, my lord,
 My speech should fall into such vile success⁴

¹ *Self-bounty* for *inherent generosity*.

² An expression from falconry : to *seel* a hawk is to sew up his eyelids.
Close as oak means as close as the grain of oak.

³ *Issues* for *conclusions*.

⁴ *Success* here means *consequence* or *event*. So in Sidney's *Arcadia*, p. 39, ed. 1613:—"Straight my heart misgave me some evil *success*."

As my thoughts aim not at. Cassio's my worthy friend.—

My lord, I see you are moved.

Oth.

No, not much moved ;—

I do not think but Desdemona's honest.

Iago. Long live she so ! and long live you to think so !

Oth. And yet, how nature, erring from itself,—

Iago. Ay, there's the point.—As,—to be bold with you,—

Not to affect many proposed matches,
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree ;
Whereto, we see, in all things nature tends :
Foh ! one may smell, in such, a will¹ most rank,
Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural.—
But pardon me ; I do not, in position,
Distinctly speak of her : though I may fear,
Her will, recoiling to her better judgment,
May fall to match you with her country forms,
And (happily) repent.

Oth.

Farewell, farewell.

If more thou dost perceive, let me know more ;
Set on thy wife to observe. Leave me, Iago.

Iago. My lord, I take my leave.

[*Going.*

Oth. Why did I marry ?—This honest creature,
doubtless,

Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.

Iago. My lord, I would I might entreat your honor
To scan this thing no further ; leave it to time ;
And though it be fit that Cassio have his place.
(For, sure, he fills it up with great ability,)
Yet, if you please to hold him off a while,
You shall by that perceive him and his means.²
Note, if your lady strain his entertainment³
With any strong or vehement importunity ;
Much will be seen in that. In the mean time,
Let me be thought too busy in my fears,

¹ *Will* for *inclination* or desire. A *rank will* is a lustful inclination.

² " You shall discover whether he thinks his best *means*, his most powerful interest, is by the solicitation of your lady."

³ I. e. press hard his readmission to his pay and office. *Entertainment* was the military term for the admission of soldiers.

(As worthy cause I have to fear—I am,)
And hold her free, I do beseech your honor.

Oth. Fear not my government.¹

Iago. I once more take my leave. [Exit.]

Oth. This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit²
Of human dealings. If I do prove her haggard,³
Though that her jesses⁴ were my dear heart-strings,
I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,
To prey at fortune. Haply, for I am black;
And have not those softs parts of conversation
That chamberers have;⁵—or, for I am declined
Into the vale of years;—yet that's not much;—
She's gone; I am abused; and my relief
Must be to loathe her. O, curse of marriage,
That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad,
And live upon the vapor of a dungeon,
Than keep a corner in the thing I love,
For others' uses. Yet 'tis the plague of great ones;
Prerogativ'd are they less than the base;
'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death;
Even then this forked plague⁶ is fated to us,
When we do quicken.⁷ Desdemona comes.

¹ Do not distrust my ability to contain my passion.

² Learned for experienced.

³ Haggard is wild, and therefore libertine. A haggard falcon was a wild hawk that had preyed for herself long before she was taken; sometimes also called a ramage falcon. Haggard was also a term of reproach, sometimes applied to a wanton.

⁴ Jesses are short straps of leather tied about the foot of a hawk, by which she is held on the fist.—“The falconers always let fly the hawk against the wind; if she flies with the wind behind her, she seldom returns. If, therefore, a hawk was for any reason to be dismissed, she was let down the wind, and from that time shifted for herself and preyed at fortune.”

⁵ Men of intrigue.

⁶ One of sir John Harington's Epigrams will illustrate this forked plague.

“Actæon guiltless unawares espying
Naked Diana bathing in her bowre
Was plagued with hornes; his dogs did him devoure;
Wherefore take heed, ye that are curious, prying,
With some such forked plague you be not smitten,
And in your foreheads see your faults be written.”

⁷ i. e. when we begin to live.

Enter DESDEMONA and EMILIA.

If she be false, O, then Heaven mocks itself!—
I'll not believe it.

Des. How now, my dear Othello?
Your dinner, and the generous islanders
By you invited, do attend your presence.

Oth. I am to blame.

Des. Why is your speech so faint? Are you not well?

Oth. I have a pain upon my forehead here.

Des. 'Faith, that's with watching; 'twill away again.
Let me but bind it hard, within this hour
It will be well.

Oth. Your napkin¹ is too little;

[He puts the handkerchief from him, and it drops.]
Let it alone. Come, I'll go in with you.

Des. I am very sorry that you are not well.

[Exeunt OTH. and DES.]

Emil. I am glad I have found this napkin;
This was her first remembrance from the Moor.
My wayward husband hath a hundred times
Woody me to steal it; but she so loves the token,
(For he conjured her she would ever keep it,)
That she reserves it evermore about her,
To kiss, and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out,²
And give 't Iago.
What he'll do with it, Heaven knows, not I;
I nothing, but to please his fantasy.

Enter IAGO.

Iago. How now! what do you here alone?

Emil. Do not you chide; I have a thing for you.

Iago. A thing for me?—It is a common thing—

Emil. Ha!

¹ In the north of England this term for a *handkerchief* is still used.

² That is, *copied*. Her first thoughts are to have a *copy* made of it for her husband, and restore the original to Desdemona; but the sudden coming in of Iago, in a surly humor, makes her alter her resolution to please him.

Iago. To have a foolish wife.

Emil. O, is that all? What will you give me now
For that same handkerchief?

Iago. What handkerchief?

Emil. What handkerchief?

Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona;
That which so often you did bid me steal.

Iago. Hast stolen it from her?

Emil. No, 'faith; she let it drop by negligence;
And, to the advantage,¹ I, being here, took't up.
Look, here it is.

Iago. A good wench; give it me.

Emil. What will you do with it, that you have been
so earnest

To have me filch it?

Iago. Why, what's that to you?

[*Snatching it.*]

Emil. If it be not for some purpose of import,
Give it me again. Poor lady! she'll run mad,
When she shall lack it.

Iago. Be not you known of't;² I have use for it.
Go, leave me. [Exit EMILIA.]

I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,
And let him find it. Trifles light as air,
Are, to the jealous, confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ. This may do something.
The Moor already changes with my poison.
Dangerous conceits are, in their natures, poisons,
Which, at the first, are scarce found to distaste;
But, with a little act upon the blood,
Burn like the mines of sulphur.—I did say so;—

Enter OTHELLO.

Look, where he comes! Not poppy, nor mandragora,³
Nor all the drowsy sirups of the world,

¹ That is, I, being *opportunistically* here, took it up.

² "Seem as if you knew nothing of the matter." The folio reads,
"Be not *acknowledged* on't."

³ The mandrake has a soporific quality, and the ancients used it when
they wanted an opiate of the most powerful kind.

Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou ow'dst¹ yesterday.

Oth. Ha! ha! false to me?
To me?

Iago. Why, how now, general? No more of that.

Oth. Avaunt! be gone! thou hast set me on the rack.—

I swear 'tis better to be much abused,
Than but to know't a little.

Iago. How now, my lord?

Oth. What sense had I of her stolen hours of lust?
I saw it not, thought it not; it harmed not me;
I slept the next night well, was free and merry;
I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips.
He that is robbed, not wanting what is stolen,
Let him not know it, and he's not robbed at all.

Iago. I am sorry to hear this.

Oth. I had been happy, if the general camp,
Pioneers² and all, had tasted her sweet body,
So I had nothing known. O, now, forever,
Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars,
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner; and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
And, O you mortal engines, whose rude throats
The immortal Jove's dread clamors counterfeit,
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!

Iago. Is it possible!—My lord,—

Oth. Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore;
Be sure of it; give me the ocular proof;

[*Taking him by the throat.*

Or, by the worth of mine eternal soul,³
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog,
Than answer my waked wrath.

¹ i. e. *possessed'st*.

² The vilest of the camp. *Pioneers* were generally degraded soldiers.

³ The quarto of 1522 reads, "*man's eternal soul*."

Iago. Is it come to this?

Oth. Make me to see it ; or (at the least) so prove it,
That the probation bear no hinge, nor loop,
To hang a doubt on ; or, woe upon thy life !

Iago. My noble lord,—

Oth. If thou dost slander her, and torture me,
Never pray more ; abandon all remorse ;¹
On horror's head horrors accumulate ;
Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amazed ;—
For nothing canst thou to damnation add,
Greater than that.

Iago. O grace, O Heaven, defend me !
Are you a man ? have you a soul, or sense ?
God be wi' you ; take mine office.—O wretched fool,
That liv'st to make thine honesty a vice !—
O monstrous world ! Take note, take note, O world,
To be direct and honest, is not safe.—
I thank you for this profit ; and, from hence,
I'll love no friend, since love breeds such offence.

Oth. Nay, stay.—Thou shouldst be honest.

Iago. I should be wise ; for honesty's a fool,
And loses that it works for.

Oth. By the world,
I think my wife be honest, and think she is not ;
I think that thou art just, and think thou art not ;
I'll have some proof. Her name, that was as fresh
As Dian's visage, is now begrim'd and black
As mine own face.—If there be cords, or knives,
Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,
I'll not endure it.—'Would I were satisfied !

Iago. I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion.
I do repent me that I put it to you.
You would be satisfied ?

Oth. Would ? nay, I will.

Iago. And may ; but, how ? how satisfied, my lord ?
Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on ?
Behold her tupp'd ?

Oth. Death and damnation ! O !

Iago. It were a tedious difficulty, I think,

¹ i. e. all tenderness of nature, all pity.

To bring them to that prospect. Damn them, then,
 If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster,
 More than their own! What then? how then?
 What shall I say? Where's satisfaction?
 It is impossible you should see this,
 Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys,
 As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross
 As ignorance made drunk. But yet, I say,
 If imputation, and strong circumstances,—
 Which lead directly to the door of truth,—
 Will give you satisfaction, you may have it.

Oth. Give me a living¹ reason she's disloyal.

Iago. I do not like the office;

But, sith I am entered in this cause so far,—
 Pricked to it by foolish honesty and love,—
 I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately;
 And, being troubled with a raging tooth,
 I could not sleep.

There are a kind of men so loose of soul,
 That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs;
 One of this kind is Cassio.

In sleep I heard him say,—*Sweet Desdemona,
 Let us be wary, let us hide our loves!*

And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,
 Cry,—*O sweet creature!* and then kiss me hard,
 As if he plucked up kisses by the roots,
 That grew upon my lips; then laid his leg
 Over my thigh, and sighed, and kissed; and then
 Cried,—*Cursed fate, that gave thee to the Moor!*

Oth. O, monstrous! monstrous!

Iago. Nay, this was but his dream.

Oth. But this denoted a foregone conclusion;²
 'Tis a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream.³

Iago. And this may help to thicken other proofs,
 That do demonstrate thinly.

¹ A living reason is a reason founded on fact and experience.

² A foregone conclusion is some former experience. Conclusion is used for experiment or trial in several other places of these plays.

³ The old quarto gives this line to Iago, as well as the two which follow; in the folio it is given to Othello.

Oth. I'll tear her all to pieces.

Iago. Nay, but be wise ; yet we see nothing done ;
She may be honest yet. Tell me but this,—
Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief,
Spotted with strawberries, in your wife's hand ?

Oth. I gave her such a one ; 'twas my first gift.

Iago. I know not that ; but such a handkerchief
(I am sure it was your wife's) did I to-day
See Cassio wipe his beard with.

Oth. If it be that,—

Iago. If it be that, or any that was hers,
It speaks against her with the other proofs.

Oth. O that the slave had forty thousand lives ;
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge !
Now do I see 'tis true.¹—Look here, Iago ;
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven.
'Tis gone.—

Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell !
Yield up, O love, thy crown, and hearted throne,²
To tyrannous hate ! swell, bosom, with thy fraught ;³
For 'tis of aspics' tongues !

Iago. Pray, be content.

Oth. O blood, Iago, blood !

Iago. Patience, I say ; your mind, perhaps, may
change.

Oth. Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic sea,⁴
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont ;
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable⁵ and wide revenge

¹ The quarto reads, "Now do I see 'tis *tune*."

² The heart on which thou wast enthroned.

³ i. e. *swell*, because the fraught thou art charged with is of poison.

⁴ From the word *Like to marble heaven*, inclusively, is not found in the quarto 1622. Pope thinks that it would be better omitted, as an unnatural excursion in this place. Shakspeare probably derived his knowledge upon this subject from the second book and ninety-seventh chapter of Pliny's Natural History, 1601 :—"and the sea Pontus evermore floweth and runneth out into Propontis ; but the sea never retireth backe againe within Pontus."

⁵ *Capable* seems to be here used for *capacious*, *comprehensive*.

Swallow them up.—Now, by yond' marble heaven,
In the due reverence of a sacred vow [Kneels.
I here engage my words.

Iago. Do not rise yet.— [Kneels.

Witness, you ever-burning lights above!
You elements that clip us round about!
Witness, that here Iago doth give up
The execution¹ of his wit, hands, heart,
To wronged Othello's service! Let him command,
And to obey shall be in me remorse,²
What bloody work soever.

Oth. I greet thy love,
Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous,
And will upon the instant put thee to't.
Within these three days let me hear thee say
That Cassio's not alive.

Iago. My friend is dead; 'tis done, at your request.
But let her live.

Oth. Damn her, lewd minx; O, damn her!
Come, go with me apart; I will withdraw
To furnish me with some swift means of death
For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

Iago. I am your own forever. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV. *The same.*

Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and Clown.

Des. Do you know, sirrah, where lieutenant Cassio
lies?

Clo. I dare not say he lies any where.

Des. Why, man?

¹ The first quarto reads *excellency*. By *execution* Shakspeare meant *employment* or *exercise*.

² Shakspeare always uses *remorse* for *pity* or *commiseration*. "Let him command whatever bloody business, and in me it shall be an act not of cruelty but of *pity* or *commiseration* to obey him." The quarto reads, "What bloody business ever."

Clo. He is a soldier; and for me to say a soldier lies, is stabbing.

Des. Go to; where lodges he?

Clo. To tell you where he lodges, is to tell you where I lie.¹

Des. Can any thing be made of this?

Clo. I know not where he lodges; and for me to devise a lodging, and say—he lies here, or he lies there, were to lie in my own throat.

Des. Can you inquire him out, and be edified by report?

Clo. I will catechize the world for him; that is, make questions, and by them answer.²

Des. Seek him, bid him come hither: tell him I have moved my lord in his behalf, and hope all will be well.

Clo. To do this, is within the compass of man's wit; and therefore I will attempt the doing it. [*Exit.*]

Des. Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?

Emil. I know not, madam.

Des. Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse Full of cruzadoes.³ And, but my noble Moor Is true of mind, and made of no such baseness As jealous creatures are, it were enough To put him to ill thinking.

Emil. Is he not jealous?

Des. Who, he? I think the sun, where he was born,

Drew all such humors from him.

Emil. Look, where he comes.

Des. I will not leave him now, till Cassio Be called to him.—How is't with you, my lord?

¹ This and the following speech are wanting in the first quarto.

² i. e. and by them, *when answered*, form my own answer to you.

³ *Cruzadoes* were of gold, and weighed from two-pennyweights six grains, to two pennyweights sixteen grains, and differed in value from six shillings and eight pence to nine shillings. The sovereigns who struck these coins were Emanuel and his son John of Portugal.

Enter OTHELLO.

Oth. Well, my good lady. [*Aside.*] O, hardness to dissemble !

How do you, Desdemona ?

Des. Well, my good lord.

Oth. Give me your hand ; this hand is moist, my lady.

Des. It yet has felt no age, nor known no sorrow.

Oth. This argues fruitfulness, and liberal heart ;
Hot, hot, and moist. This hand of yours requires
A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,
Much castigation, exercise devout ;
For here's a young and sweating devil here,
That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,
A frank one.

Des. You may, indeed, say so ;
For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.

Oth. A liberal hand. The hearts, of old, gave hands ;
But our new heraldry is—hands, not hearts.

Des. I cannot speak of this. Come, now, your promise.

Oth. What promise, chuck ?

Des. I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

Oth. I have a salt and sullen¹ rheum offends me ;
Lend me thy handkerchief.

Des. Here, my lord.

Oth. That which I gave you.

Des. I have it not about me.

Oth. Not ?

Des. No, indeed, my lord.

Oth. That is a fault.

That handkerchief

Did an Egyptian to my mother give :

She was a charmer,² and could almost read

¹ The folio reads "*sorry*." Rider explains *sullen* by *acerbus* (Latin).

² *Charmer*, for *enchanter*, is of common occurrence in Scripture.

The thoughts of people. She told her, while she kept it,
 'Twould make her amiable, and subdue my father
 Entirely to her love ; but if she lost it,
 Or made a gift of it, my father's eye
 Should hold her loathly, and his spirits should hunt
 After new fancies. She, dying, gave it me ;
 And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,
 To give it her. I did so ; and take heed of't,
 Make it a darling like your precious eye :
 To lose or give't away, were such perdition,
 As nothing else could match.

Des. Is it possible ?

Oth. 'Tis true ; there's magic in the web of it.
 A sibyl, that had numbered in the world
 The sun to make two hundred compasses,
 In her prophetic fury sewed the work.
 The worms were hallowed that did breed the silk ;
 And it was dyed in mummy,¹ which the skilful
 Conserved of maidens' hearts.²

Des. Indeed ! is't true ?

Oth. Most veritable ; therefore look to't well.

Des. Then 'would to Heaven that I had never
 seen it.

Oth. Ha ! wherefore ?

Des. Why do you speak so startingly and rash ?

Oth. Is't lost ? is't gone ? Speak, is it out of the
 way ?

Des. Heaven bless us !

Oth. Say you ?

Des. It is not lost ; but what an if it were ?

Oth. Ha !

Des. I say it is not lost.

Oth. Fetch't ; let me see it.

Des. Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now ;
 This is a trick to put me from my suit ;
 I pray, let Cassio be received again.

¹ The balsamic liquor running from *mummies* was formerly celebrated for its anti-epileptic virtues. This fanciful medicine held a place in the druggists' shops till lately.

² The quarto reads "*with the skilful conserves,*" &c.

Oth. Fetch me that handkerchief; my mind mis-gives.

Des. Come, come ;
You'll never meet a more sufficient man.

Oth. The handkerchief,——

Des. I pray, talk me of Cassio.¹

Oth. The handkerchief,——

Des. A man that, all his time,
Hath founded his good fortune on your love ;
Shared dangers with you ;——

Oth. The handkerchief,——

Des. In sooth,
You are to blame.

Oth. Away ! [*Exit OTHELLO.*]

Emil. Is not this man jealous?

Des. I ne'er saw this before.
Sure there's some wonder in this handkerchief;
I am most unhappy in the loss of it.

Emil. 'Tis not a year or two shows us a man.
They are all but stomachs, and we all but food ;
● They eat us hungerly, and when they are full,
They belch us. Look you ! Cassio, and my husband.

Enter IAGO and CASSIO.

Iago. There is no other way ; 'tis she must do't ;
And, lo, the happiness ! Go, and impórtune her.

Des. How now, good Cassio ? what's the news with you ?

Cas. Madam, my former suit. I do beseech you,
That, by your virtuous means, I may again
Exist, and be a member of his love,
Whom I, with all the duty ² of my heart,
Entirely honor ; I would not be delayed.
If my offence be of such mortal kind,

¹ This and the following short speech are omitted in all the ancient editions but the first quarto. The idiom "talk me of Cassio" is familiar to the French language.

² The folio reads "the office of my heart;" the words were, however, synonymous.

That neither service past, nor present sorrows,
 Nor purposed merit in futurity,
 Can ransom me into his love again,
 But to know so must be my benefit;
 So shall I clothe me in a forced content,
 And shut myself up¹ in some other course,
 To fortune's alms.

Des. Alas! thrice gentle Cassio,
 My advocacy is not now in tune;
 My lord is not my lord; nor should I know him,
 Were he in favor,² as in humor, altered.
 So help me, every spirit sanctified,
 As I have spoken for you all my best;
 And stood within the blank³ of his displeasure,
 For my free speech! You must awhile be patient;
 What I can do, I will; and more I will,
 Than for myself I dare: let that suffice you.

Iago. Is my lord angry?

Emil. He went hence but now,
 And, certainly, in strange unquietness.

Iago. Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon, ●
 When it hath blown his ranks into the air;
 And, like the devil, from his very arm
 Puffed his own brother;—And can he be angry?
 Something of moment, then. I will go meet him;
 There's matter in't indeed, if he be angry.

Des. I pr'ythee, do so.—Something, sure, of state,—
 [Exit IAGO.]

Either from Venice; or some unhatched practice,⁴
 Made démonstrable here in Cyprus to him,—
 Hath puddled his clear spirit; and, in such cases,
 Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,
 Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even so;

¹ *Shut myself up* evidently signifies no more than "*confine* myself." One of the old quartos reading "*shoot* myself up," by mistake, Mason contends for that reading.—"To fortune's alms" means waiting patiently for whatever bounty fortune, or chance, may bestow upon me.

² i. e. in countenance.

³ To stand *within the blank* is to stand in the *direct range* or in the *immediate course*; to have his displeasure *directed* toward her.

⁴ Some *undeveloped treason*.

For let our finger ache, and it indues¹
 Our other healthful members even to that sense
 Of pain. Nay, we must think men are not gods;
 Nor of them look for such observances
 As fit the bridal.²—Beshrew me much, Emilia,
 I was (unhandsome warrior³ as I am)
 Arraigning his unkindness with my soul;
 But now I find I had suborned the witness,
 And he's indicted falsely

Emil. Pray Heaven it be state matters, as you
 think;

And no conception, nor no jealous toy,
 Concerning you.

Des. Alas, the day! I never gave him cause.

Emil. But jealous souls will not be answered so;
 They are not ever jealous for the cause,
 But jealous for they are jealous. 'Tis a monster,
 Begot upon itself, born on itself.

Des. Heaven keep that monster from Othello's
 mind!

Emil. Lady, amen.

Des. I will go seek him.—Cassio, walk here about;
 If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit,
 And seek to effect it to my uttermost.

Cas. I humbly thank your ladyship.

[*Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA.*]

Enter BIANCA.

Bian. Save you, friend Cassio!

Cas. What make you from home?
 How is it with you, my most fair Bianca?
 I'faith, sweet love, I was coming to your house.

Bian. And I was going to your lodging, Cassio.
 What! keep a week away? seven days and nights?
 Eightscore hours? and lovers' absent hours,
 More tedious than the dial eightscore times?
 O weary reckoning!

¹ *Indue* was used formerly where we now use *imbue*.

² i. e. the nuptial feast.

³ *Unfair assailant.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *Before the Castle.**Enter OTHELLO and IAGO.**Iago.* Will you think so?*Oth.* Think so, Iago?*Iago.* What?

To kiss in private?

Oth. An unauthorized kiss.*Iago.* Or to be naked with her friend abed,
An hour, or more, not meaning any harm?*Oth.* Naked abed, Iago, and not mean harm?
It is hypocrisy against the devil.They that mean virtuously, and yet do so,
The devil their virtue tempts, and they tempt Heaven.*Iago.* So they do nothing, 'tis a venial slip;
But if I give my wife a handkerchief,—*Oth.* What then?*Iago.* Why then, 'tis hers, my lord; and, being
hers,

She may, I think, bestow't on any man.

Oth. She is protectress of her honor too;
May she give that?*Iago.* Her honor is an essence that's not seen;
They have it very oft, that have it not.

But, for the handkerchief,—

Oth. By Heaven, I would most gladly have forgot
it.—Thou said'st,—O, it comes o'er my memory,
As doth the raven o'er the infected house,
Boding to all,¹—he had my handkerchief.*Iago.* Ay, what of that?*Oth.* That's not so good, now.

¹ The raven was thought to be a constant attendant on a house infected with the plague.

Iago. What if I had said I had seen him do you wrong?
Or heard him say,—as knaves be such abroad,
Who having, by their own importunate suit,
Or voluntary dotage of some mistress,
Convinced or supplied¹ them, cannot choose
But they must blab——

Oth. Hath he said any thing?

Iago. He hath, my lord; but be you well assured,
No more than he'll unswear.

Oth. What hath he said?

Iago. 'Faith, that he did,—I know not what he did.

Oth. What? what?

Iago. Lie——

Oth. With her?

Iago. With her, on her; what you will.

Oth. Lie with her! lie on her!—We say lie on her, when they belie her. Lie with her! that's fulsome. —Handkerchief, — confessions, — handkerchief. —To confess, and be hanged for his labor.²—First to be hanged, and then to confess:—I tremble at it. Nature would not invest herself in such shadowing passion, without some instruction.³ It is not words that shake me thus.—Pish!—Noses, ears, and lips.—Is it possible?—Confess!—Handkerchief!—O devil!—

[*Falls in a trance.*]

Iago. Work on,
My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught;

¹ For *supplied*, Theobald would here read *suppled*, i. e. *softened, subdued*. Steevens thinks that *supplied* is the true reading, and with a sense that may be collected from the following passage in *Measure for Measure*:—

“And did supply thee at the summer-house.”

² What remains of this speech, from *to confess*, is wanting in the 4to.

³ “The starts and broken reflections in this speech (says Warburton) have something in them very terrible, and show the mind of the speaker to be in inexpressible agonies.”

There is a difference of opinion between the commentators; some thinking, with Warburton, that the words “Nature would not invest herself in such *shadowing passion*, without some *instruction*,” allude to his own feelings; others, that they advert to the story about Cassio's dream, which had been invented and told him by Iago.

And many worthy and chaste dames, even thus,
All guiltless meet reproach.—What, ho! my lord!

Enter CASSIO.

My lord, I say! Othello! How now, Cassio?

Cas. What is the matter?

Iago. My lord is fallen into an epilepsy;
This is his second fit; he had one yesterday.

Cas. Rub him about the temples.

Iago.

No, forbear.

The lethargy must have his quiet course;
If not, he foams at mouth; and, by and by,
Breaks out to savage madness. Look, he stirs.
Do you withdraw yourself a little while,
He will recover straight; when he is gone,
I would on great occasion speak with you.—

[*Exit CASSIO.*

How is it, general? have you not hurt your head?

Oth. Dost thou mock me?

Iago. I mock you! no, by Heaven;
'Would you would bear your fortunes like a man.

Oth. A horned man's a monster, and a beast.

Iago. There's many a beast, then, in a populous
city,

And many a civil monster.

Oth. Did he confess it?

Iago.

Good sir, be a man;

Think every bearded fellow that's but yoked,
May draw with you; there's millions now alive,
That nightly lie in those unproper¹ beds,
Which they dare swear peculiar; your case is better.
O, 'tis the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,
To lip a wanton in a secure couch,²
And to suppose her chaste! No, let me know;
And, knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.

Oth. O, thou art wise; 'tis certain.

¹ *Unproper for common.*

² *In a couch in which he is lulled into a false security.*

Iago. Stand you awhile apart:
 Confine yourself but in a patient list.¹
 Whilst you were here, ere while mad ² with your grief,
 (A passion most unsuited such a man,)
 Cassio came hither. I shifted him away,
 And laid good 'scuse upon your ecstasy;
 Bade him anon return, and here speak with me;
 The which he promised. Do but encave ³ yourself,
 And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns,
 That dwell in every region of his face;
 For I will make him tell the tale anew,—
 Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when
 He hath, and is again to cope your wife.
 I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience;
 Or I shall say, you are all in all in spleen,
 And nothing of a man.

Oth. Dost thou hear, Iago?
 I will be found most cunning in my patience;
 But (dost thou hear?) most bloody.

Iago. That's not amiss;
 But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw?
 [OTHELLO *withdraws*.

Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,
 A housewife, that, by selling her desires,
 Buys herself bread and clothes. It is a creature
 That dotes on Cassio,—as 'tis the strumpet's plague,
 To beguile many, and be beguiled by one;
 He, when he hears of her, cannot refrain
 From the excess of laughter!—Here he comes.—

Re-enter CASSIO.

As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad;
 And his unbookish ⁴ jealousy must construe
 Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures, and light behavior
 Quite in the wrong.—How do you now, lieutenant?

¹ i. e. within the *bounds* of patience.

² The folio reads "o'erwhelmed with your grief."

³ *Hide* yourself in a private place.

⁴ *Unbookish* for *ignorant*.

Cas. The worser, that you give me the addition,
Whose want even kills me.

Iago. Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure of't.
Now, if this suit lay in Bianca's power,
[*Speaking lower.*

How quickly should you speed ?

Cas. Alas, poor caitiff !

Oth. Look, how he laughs already ! [*Aside.*

Iago. I never knew a woman love man so.

Cas. Alas, poor rogue ! I think, i'faith, she loves me.

Oth. Now he denies it faintly, and laughs it out.
[*Aside.*

Iago. Do you hear, Cassio ?

Oth. Now he importunes him
To tell it o'er. Go to ; well said, well said. [*Aside.*

Iago. She gives it out that you shall marry her.
Do you intend it ?

Cas. Ha, ha, ha !

Oth. Do you triumph, Roman ?¹ do you triumph ?
[*Aside.*

Cas. I marry her !—what ? a customer !² I pr'ythee,
bear some charity to my wit ; do not think it so un-
wholesome. Ha, ha, ha !

Oth. So, so, so, so. They laugh that win. [*Aside.*

Iago. 'Faith, the cry goes that you shall marry
her.

Cas. Pr'ythee, say true.

Iago. I am a very villain else.

Oth. Have you scored me ?³ Well. [*Aside.*

Cas. This is the monkey's own giving out ; she is
persuaded I will marry her, out of her own love and
flattery, not out of my promise.

Oth. Iago beckons me ; now he begins the story.
[*Aside.*

¹ Othello calls him *Roman* ironically.

² A common woman.

³ i. e. "have you *numbered my days* ?" To *score* is to tale or tell, to number, or mark as on a tally. But perhaps it only means, "have you *marked me* ?" as beasts are *scored* or *marked* when purchased for slaughter. The old quarto reads "have you *stored me* ?"

Cas. She was here even now; she haunts me in every place. I was, the other day, talking on the sea-bank with certain Venetians; and thither comes this bawble; by this hand,¹ she falls thus about my neck;—

Oth. Crying, O dear Cassio! as it were: his gesture imports it. [*Aside.*

Cas. So hangs, and lolls, and weeps upon me; so hales, and pulls me. Ha, ha, ha!—

Oth. Now he tells how she plucked him to my chamber. O, I see that nose of yours, but not that dog I shall throw it to. [*Aside.*

Cas. Well, I must leave her company.

Iago. Before me! look where she comes.

Enter BIANCA.

Cas. 'Tis such another fitchew!² marry, a perfumed one.—What do you mean by this haunting of me?

Bian. Let the devil and his dam haunt you! What did you mean by that same handkerchief you gave me even now? I was a fine fool to take it. I must take out the whole work?—A likely piece of work that you should find it in your chamber, and not know who left it there! This is some minx's token, and I must take out the work! There,—give it your hobby-horse. Wheresoever you had it, I'll take out no work on't.

Cas. How now, my sweet Bianca? how now? how now?

Oth. By Heaven, that should be my handkerchief.

[*Aside.*

Bian. An you'll come to supper to-night, you may; an you will not, come when you are next prepared for.

[*Exit.*

Iago. After her, after her.

Cas. 'Faith, I must; she'll rail in the street else.

¹ The folio omits "by this hand;" and reads "thither comes the bauble and falls me thus," &c.

² Shakspeare has alluded to the lust of this animal in *King Lear*. He tells *Iago* that *Bianca* is as lewd, but of a better scent.

Iago. Will you sup there ?

Cas. 'Faith, I intend so.

Iago. Well, I may chance to see you ; for I would very fain speak with you.

Cas. Pr'ythee, come ; will you ?

Iago. Go to ; say no more. [Exit CASSIO.

Oth. How shall I murder him, Iago ?

Iago. Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice ?

Oth. O Iago !

Iago. And did you see the handkerchief ?

Oth. Was that mine ?

Iago. Yours, by this hand ; and to see how he prizes the foolish woman, your wife ! she gave it him, and he hath given it his whore.

Oth. I would have him nine years a killing.—A fine woman ! a fair woman ! a sweet woman !

Iago. Nay, you must forget that.

Oth. Ay, let her rot, and perish, and be damned to-night ; for she shall not live. No, my heart is turned to stone ; I strike it, and it hurts my hand. O, the world hath not a sweeter creature ; she might lie by an emperor's side, and command him tasks.

Iago. Nay, that's not your way.

Oth. Hang her ! I do but say what she is.—So delicate with her needle !—An admirable musician ! O, she will sing the savageness out of a bear !—Of so high and plenteous wit and invention !—

Iago. She is the worse for all this.

Oth. O, a thousand, a thousand times.—And then, of so gentle a condition !

Iago. Ay, too gentle.

Oth. Nay, that's certain. But yet the pity of it, Iago !—O Iago, the pity of it, Iago !

Iago. If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend ; for, if it touch not you, it comes near nobody.

Oth. I will chop her into messes !—Cuckold me !

Iago. O, 'tis foul in her.

Oth. With mine officer !

Iago. That's fouler.

Des. My lord?

Oth. Are you wise?

Des. What, is he angry?

Lod. May be, the letter moved him ;
For, as I think, they do command him home,
Deputing Cassio in his government.

Des. By my troth, I am glad on't.

Oth. Indeed!

Des. My lord?

Oth. I am glad to see you mad.

Des. How, sweet Othello?

Oth. Devil! [*Striking her.*

Des. I have not deserved this.

Lod. My lord, this would not be believed in Venice,
Though I should swear I saw it. 'Tis very much ;
Make her amends, she weeps.

Oth. O devil, devil !
If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,
Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.¹—
Out of my sight!

Des. I will not stay to offend you. [*Going.*

Lod. Truly, an obedient lady.—
I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

Oth. Mistress,——

Des. My lord?

Oth. What would you with her, sir?

Lod. Who, I, my lord?

Oth. Ay; you did wish that I would make her
turn;

Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on,
And turn again; and she can weep, sir, weep;
And she's obedient, as you say,—obedient,—
Very obedient.—Proceed you in your tears.—
Concerning this, sir,—O, well-painted passion!

¹ "If women's tears could impregnate the earth." Shakspeare here alludes to the fabulous accounts which make the crocodile the most deceitful of animals, whose tears are proverbially fallacious. "It is written that he will weep over a man's head when he hath devoured the body, and will then eat up the head too."

To *fall* in this passage, is a verb active.

SCENE II.¹ *A Room in the Castle.**Enter OTHELLO and EMILIA.**Oth.* You have seen nothing, then ?*Emil.* Nor ever heard ; nor ever did suspect.*Oth.* Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.*Emil.* But then I saw no harm ; and then I heard
Each syllable that breath made up between them.*Oth.* What, did they never whisper ?*Emil.* Never, my lord.*Oth.* Nor send you out o' the way ?*Emil.* Never.*Oth.* To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor
nothing ?*Emil.* Never, my lord.*Oth.* That's strange.*Emil.* I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,
Lay down my soul at stake. If you think other,
Remove your thought ; it doth abuse your bosom.
If any wretch hath put this in your head,
Let Heaven requite it with the serpent's curse !
For, if she be not honest, chaste, and true,
There's no man happy ; the purest of their wives²
Is foul as slander.*Oth.* Bid her come hither ;—go.—[*Exit EMILIA.*]She says enough ;—yet she's a simple bawd
That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore,

¹ There are great difficulties in ascertaining the place of this scene. What Othello says in an early part of it to Emilia—"Leave procreants alone, and shut the door,"—and his subsequent address to her as he goes out, decisively point out a room in Othello's castle as the place of the scene ; and compel us to place the interlocutors there, however inconsistent with Roderigo's entry, and Iago's address to Desdemona, "Go in and weep not." The truth is, that our Poet and his audience, in this instance, as in many others, were content, from want of scenery, to consider the very same spot, at one and the same time, as the outside and inside of a house.

² The quarto reads "*of her sex.*"

A closet-lock-and-key of villainous secrets :
And yet she'll kneel, and pray ; I have seen her do't.

Re-enter EMILIA, with DESDEMONA.

Des. My lord, what is your will ?

Oth. 'Pray, chuck, come hither.

Des. What is your pleasure ?

Oth. Let me see your eyes ;
Look in my face.

Des. What horrible fancy's this ?

Oth. Some of your function, mistress ; [*To EMILIA.*
Leave procreants alone, and shut the door ;
Cough, or cry—*Hem*, if any body come.
Your mystery, your mystery ;—nay, despatch.

[*Exit EMILIA.*

Des. Upon my knees, what doth your speech
import ?

I understand a fury in your words,
But not the words.¹

Oth. Why, what art thou ?

Des. Your wife, my lord ; your true
And loyal wife.

Oth. Come, swear it, damn thyself ;
Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves
Should fear to seize thee : therefore be double-damned,
Swear—thou art honest.

Des. Heaven doth truly know it.

Oth. Heaven truly knows that thou art false as hell.

Des. To whom, my lord ? with whom ? How am I
false ?

Oth. O Desdemona !—away ! away ! away !

Des. Alas, the heavy day !—Why do you weep ?
Am I the occasion of these tears, my lord ?
If, haply, you my father do suspect,
An instrument of this your calling back,
Lay not your blame on me ; if you have lost him,
Why, I have lost him too.

¹ This line is not in the folio.

Oth. Had it pleased Heaven
To try me with affliction ; had he rained
All kinds of sores, and shames, on my bare head ;
Steeped me in poverty to the very lips ;
Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes ;
I should have found in some part of my soul
A drop of patience : but (alas !) to make me
A fixed figure, for the time of scorn¹
To point his slow, unmoving finger at,—
O ! O !

Yet could I bear that too ; well, very well :
But there, where I have garnered up my heart ;
Where either I must live, or bear no life ;
The fountain from the which my current runs,
Or else dries up ; to be discarded thence,
Or keep it as a cistern, for foul toads
To knot and gender in !—Turn thy complexion there !
Patience, thou young and rose-lipped cherubim ;
Ay, there, look grim as hell !²

Des. I hope my noble lord esteems me honest.

Oth. O, ay ; as summer flies are in the shambles,
That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed,³
Who art so lovely fair, and smell'st so sweet,
That the sense aches at thee.—'Would thou hadst
ne'er been born !

Des. Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed ?

Oth. Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,

¹ Rowe reads "the *hand* of scorn," a satisfactory emendation ; and it is to be wished that there was sufficient authority to admit it into the text. Steevens thinks the old reading right, saying, that Othello takes his idea from a clock.

The folio reads *and moving* instead of *unmoving* ; but the reading adopted in the text is probably correct, and the meaning seems to be, that the finger of scorn never *moves* from, or ceases to point at its object.

² "At such an object do thou, *patience*, thyself *change color* ; at this do thou, even thou, *rosy cherub* as thou art, *look grim as hell*." The old copies have, "I *here* look grim as hell." I was written for *ay* ; and *here* was an evident error of the press for *there*. Theobald made the correction.

³ The quarto reads :—

"O thou *black weed*, *why art* so lovely fair ?
Thou smell'st so sweet, that the *sense* aches at thee."

Made to write *whore* upon? What committed!¹
 Committed!—O, thou public commoner!
 I should make very forges of my cheeks,
 That would to cinders burn up modesty,
 Did I but speak thy deeds.—What committed!
 Heaven stops the nose at it, and the moon winks;
 The bawdy wind, that kisses all it meets,
 Is hushed within the hollow mine of earth,
 And will not hear it. What committed!—
 Impudent strumpet!

Des. By Heaven, you do me wrong.

Oth. Are not you a strumpet?

No, as I am a Christian.

If to preserve this vessel for my lord,²
 From any other foul, unlawful touch,
 Be—not to be a strumpet, I am none.

Oth. What, not a whore?

Des.

No, as I shall be saved.

Oth. Is it possible?

Des. O Heaven, forgive us!

Oth.

I cry you mercy, then;

I took you for that cunning whore of Venice,
 That married with Othello.—You, mistress,

Re-enter EMILIA.

That have the office opposite to saint Peter,
 And keep the gate of hell; you! you! ay, you!
 We have done our course; there's money for your
 pains;

I pray you, turn the key, and keep our counsel. [*Exit.*

Emil. Alas, what does this gentleman conceive?

How do you, madam? how do you, my good lady?

Des. Faith, half asleep.

Emil. Good madam, what's the matter with my
 lord?

Des. With who?

¹ This and the three following lines are not in the first quarto.

² This expression is from Sacred Writ:—"To possess his vessel in sanctification."

Emil. Why, with my lord, madam.

Des. Who is thy lord?¹

Emil. He that is yours, sweet lady.

Des. I have none. Do not talk to me, Emilia;
I cannot weep; nor answer I have none,
But what should go by water. 'Pr'ythee, to-night
Lay on my bed my wedding-sheets,—remember;—
And call thy husband hither.

Emil. Here is a change indeed! [*Exit.*]

Des. 'Tis meet I should be used so, very meet.
How have I been behaved, that he might stick
The small'st opinion on my great'st abuse?²

Re-enter EMILIA, with IAGO.

Iago. What is your pleasure, madam? How is it
with you?

Des. I cannot tell. Those that do teach young
babes,
Do it with gentle means, and easy tasks.
He might have chid me so; for, in good faith,
I am a child to chiding.

Iago. What's the matter, lady?

Emil. Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhored her,
Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her,
As true hearts cannot bear.

Des. Am I that name, Iago?

Iago. What name, fair lady?

Des. Such as she says my lord did say I was.

Emil. He called her whore; a beggar in his drink
Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.³

Iago. Why did he so?

Des. I do not know; I am sure, I am none such.

Iago. Do not weep, do not weep. Alas, the day!

Emil. Has she forsook so many noble matches,

¹ This and the following speech are not in the quarto.

² This is the reading of the quarto; which Dr. Johnson thought preferable to the reading of the folio—*on my least misuse*.

³ A *callet* is a *trull*, a *drab*. The word is of great antiquity in the English language.

Her father and her country, and her friends,
To be called—whore? would it not make one weep?

Des. It is my wretched fortune.

Iago. Beshrew him for it!

How comes this trick upon him?

Des. Nay, Heaven doth know.

Emil. I will be hanged, if some eternal villain,
Some busy and insinuating rogue,
Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,
Have not devised this slander. I'll be hanged else.

Iago. Fie, there is no such man; it is impossible.

Des. If any such there be, Heaven pardon him!

Emil. A halter pardon him! and hell gnaw his
bones!

Why should he call her—whore? who keeps her
company?

What place? what time? what form? what likelihood?
The Moor's abused by some most villanous knave,¹
Some base, notorious knave, some scurvy fellow.—
O Heaven, that such companions² thou'dst unfold;
And put in every honest hand a whip,
To lash the rascal naked through the world,
Even from the east to the west!

Iago. Speak within door.³

Emil. O, fie upon him! some such squire he was,
That turned your wit the seamy side without,
And made you to suspect me with the Moor.

Iago. You are a fool; go to.

Des. O good Iago,

What shall I do to win my lord again?
Good friend, go to him; for, by this light of heaven,
I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel.⁴—
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,
Either in discourse of thought,⁵ or actual deed;
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,

¹ The quarto has, "some outrageous knave."

² Companion was a term of contempt.

³ "Do not clamor so as to be heard beyond the house."

⁴ The quarto omits the rest of this speech.

⁵ "Discourse of thought" is the "discursive range of thought." Pope changed it to "discourse or thought."

Delighted them in any other form ;
Or that I do not yet, and ever did,
And ever will,—though he do shake me off
To beggarly divorcement,—love him dearly,
Comfort forswear me ! Unkindness may do much ;
And his unkindness may defeat my life,
But never taint my love. I cannot say, whore ;
It does abhor me, now I speak the word ;
To do the act that might the addition earn,
Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.

Iago. I pray you, be content ; 'tis but his humor.
The business of the state does him offence,
And he does chide with you.¹

Des. If 'twere no other,—

Iago. It is but so, I warrant you. [*Trumpets.*
Hark, how these instruments summon to supper !
And the great messengers of Venice stay.²
Go in, and weep not ; all things shall be well.

[*Exeunt* DESDEMONA and EMILIA.]

Enter RODERIGO.

How now, Roderigo ?

Rod. I do not find that thou deal'st justly with me.

Iago. What in the contrary ?

Rod. Every day thou doff'st me with some device,
Iago ; and rather (as it seems to me now) keep'st
from me all conveniency, than suppliest me with the
least advantage of hope. I will, indeed, no longer
endure it ; nor am I yet persuaded, to put up in peace
what already I have foolishly suffered.

Iago. Will you hear me, Roderigo ?

Rod. 'Faith, I have heard too much ; for your words
and performances are no kin together.

Iago. You charge me most unjustly.

Rod. With nought but truth. I have wasted myself
out of my means. The jewels you have had from me,

¹ This was the phraseology of the time.

² Thus the quarto. The folio reads :—

“ The messengers of Venice stay the meat.”

to deliver to Desdemona, would half have corrupted a votarist. You have told me she has received them, and returned me expectations and comforts, ~~at~~ sudden respect and acquittance;¹ but I find none.

Iago. Well; go to; very well.

Rod. Very well! go to! I cannot go to, man; nor 'tis not very well. By this hand, I say, it is very scurvy; and begin to find myself fobbed in it.

Iago. Very well.

Rod. I tell you 'tis not very well. I will make myself known to Desdemona. If she will return me my jewels, I will give over my suit, and repent my unlawful solicitation; if not, assure yourself, I will seek satisfaction of you.

Iago. You have said now.

Rod. Ay, and I have said nothing but what I protest intendment of doing.

Iago. Why, now I see there's mettle in thee; and even, from this instant, do build on thee a better opinion than ever before. Give me thy hand, Roderigo. Thou hast taken against me a most just exception; but yet I protest I have dealt most directly in thy affair.

Rod. It hath not appeared.

Iago. I grant, indeed, it hath not appeared; and your suspicion is not without wit and judgment. But, Roderigo, if thou hast that within thee, indeed, which I have greater reason to believe now than ever,—I mean, purpose, courage, and valor,—this night show it. If thou the next night following enjoyest not Desdemona, take me from this world with treachery, and devise engines for my life.²

Rod. Well, what is it? is it within reason, and compass?

Iago. Sir, there is especial commission come from Venice, to depute Cassio in Othello's place.

Rod. Is that true? why, then Othello and Desdemona return again to Venice.

Iago. O, no; he goes into Mauritania, and takes

¹ The folio reads *acquaintance*. *Acquittance* is *requital*.

² To *devise engines* seems to mean to contrive instruments of torture, &c.

away with him the fair Desdemona, unless his abode be lingered here by some accident; wherein none can be so determinate, as the removing of Cassio.

Rod. How do you mean—removing of him?—

Iago. Why, by making him incapable of Othello's place; knocking out his brains.

Rod. And that you would have me do?

Iago. Ay; if you dare do yourself a profit, and a right. He sups to-night with a harlot,¹ and thither will I go to him;—he knows not yet of his honorable fortune. If you will watch his going thence, (which I will fashion to fall out between twelve and one,) you may take him at your pleasure; I will be near to second your attempt, and he shall fall between us. Come, stand not amazed at it, but go along with me; I will show you such a necessity in his death, that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him. It is now high supper-time, and the night grows to waste:² about it.

Rod. I will hear further reason for this.

Iago. And you shall be satisfied. [Exeunt.

SCENE III. *Another Room in the Castle.*

Enter OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and Attendants.

Lod. I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further.

Oth. O, pardon me; 'twill do me good to walk.

Lod. Madam, good night; I humbly thank your ladyship.

Des. Your honor is most welcome.

Oth. Will you walk, sir?—

O,—Desdemona,—

Des. My lord?

¹ The folio reads "*a harlotry*." Shakspeare has the expression, "*a peevish, self-willed harlotry*," in two other plays.

² i. e. the night is *wasting apace*.

Emil. Shall I go fetch your night-gown?

Des. No; unpin me here.—

This Lodovico is a proper man.

Emil. A very handsome man.

Des. And he speaks well.

Emil. I know a lady in Venice, who would have walked barefoot to Palestine, for a touch of his nether lip.

L

Des. *The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
Sing all a green willow;* [Singing.

Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,

Sing willow, willow, willow:

*The fresh streams ran by her, and murmured her
moans;*

Sing willow, &c.

Her salt tears fell from her, and softened the stones;

Lay by these:

Sing willow, willow, willow;

Pr'ythee, hie thee; he'll come anon.—

Sing all a green willow must be my garland.

II.

Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve,—

Nay, that's not next—hark! who is it that knocks?

Emil. It is the wind.

Des. *I called my love, false love; but what said he
then?*

Sing willow, &c.

If I court mo women, you'll couch with mo men.¹

So, get thee gone: good night. Mine eyes do itch;
Doth that bode weeping?

Emil. 'Tis neither here nor there.

¹ This couplet is not in the original ballad.

Des. I have heard it said so.¹—O, these men, these men!—

Dost thou in conscience think,—tell me, *Emilia*,—
That there be women do abuse their husbands
In such gross kind?

Emil. There be some such, no question.

Des. Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

Emil. Why, would not you?

Des. No, by this heavenly light!

Emil. Nor I neither by this heavenly light;
I might do't as well i' the dark.

Des. Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

Emil. The world is a huge thing. 'Tis a great price
For a small vice.

Des. Good troth, I think thou wouldst not.

Emil. By my troth, I think I should; and undo't,
when I had done. Marry, I would not do such a thing
for a joint-ring;² nor for measures of lawn; nor for
gowns, petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition:
but, for the whole world,—why, who would not make
her husband a cuckold, to make him a monarch? I
should venture purgatory for't.

Des. Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong for
the whole world.

Emil. Why, the wrong is but a wrong i' the world;
and, having the world for your labor, 'tis a wrong in
your own world, and you might quickly make it right.

Des. I do not think there is any such woman.

Emil. Yes, a dozen; and as many
To the vantage,³ as would store the world they played
for.

But I do think, it is their husbands' faults
If wives do fall. Say, that they slack their duties,
And pour our treasures into foreign laps;
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,
Throwing restraint upon us; or, say they strike us,

¹ This, as well as the following speech, is omitted in the first quarto.

² A joint-ring was anciently a common token among lovers.

³ i. e. to boot, over and above. The remaining part of this speech is omitted in the first quarto.

Or scant our former having¹ in despite :
 Why, we have galls ; and, though we have some grace,
 Yet we have some revenge. Let husbands know
 Their wives have sense² like them : they see, and smell,
 And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
 As husbands have. What is it that they do,
 When they change us for others ? Is it sport ?
 I think it is ; and doth affection breed it ?
 I think it doth ; is't frailty, that thus errs ?
 It is so too ; and have not we affections ?
 Desires for sport ? and frailty, as men have ?
 Then let them use us well ; else, let them know,
 The ills we do, their ills instruct us to.³

Des. Good night, good night ; Heaven me such
 usage⁴ send,
 Not to pick bad from bad ; but, by bad, mend !

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I. *A Street.*

Enter IAGO and RODERIGO.

Iago. Here, stand behind this bulk ; straight will he
 come ;
 Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home.
 Quick, quick ; fear nothing ; I'll be at thy elbow.
 It makes us, or it mars us ; think on that,
 And fix most firm thy resolution.

Rod. Be near at hand ; I may miscarry in't.

Iago. Here, at thy hand, be bold, and take thy
 sword. [*Retires to a little distance.*

¹ Our former allowance of expense.

² *Sense* is here used, as in *Hamlet*, for *sensation*, or *sensual appetites*.

³ The old copy reads, "their ills instruct us so."

⁴ "Such *uses*" is the reading of the folio ; but the first quarto has
 "such *usage*."

Enter OTHELLO, at a distance.

Oth. The voice of Cassio.—Iago keeps his word.

Rod. O, villain that I am!

Oth. Hark! 'Tis even so.

Cas. O, help! ho! light! a surgeon!

Oth. 'Tis he;—O brave Iago, honest, and just,
That hast such noble sense of thy friend's wrong!
Thou teachest me,—minion, your dear lies dead
And your fate hies¹ apace.—Strumpet, I come.
Forth² of my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted;
Thy bed, lust-stained, shall with lust's blood be spotted.
[*Exit OTHELLO.*

Enter LODOVICO and GRATIANO, at a distance.

Cas. What, ho! no watch! no passage?³ murder!
murder!

Gra. 'Tis some mischance; the cry is very direful.

Cas. O, help!

Lod. Hark!

Rod. O wretched villain!

Lod. Two or three groans;—it is a heavy⁴ night.
These may be counterfeits; let's think't unsafe
To come into the cry without more help.

Rod. Nobody come? then shall I bleed to death.

Enter IAGO, with a light.

Lod. Hark!

Gra. Here's one comes in his shirt, with light and
weapons.

Iago. Who's there? whose noise is this, that cries
on murder?⁵

¹ Thus the first quarto. The second quarto and the folio read "And your unblest fate hies."

² The folio reads "for of;" the quarto reads forth of, i. e. out of.

³ No passengers? nobody going by?

⁴ i. e. a thick, cloudy night.

⁵ This phrase, to cry on, for cry out on, has already occurred in Hamlet, Act v. Sc. 2.

Lod. We do not know.

Iago. Did you not hear a cry?

Cas. Here, here; for Heaven's sake, help me.

Iago. What's the matter?

Gra. This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.

Lod. The same, indeed; a very valiant fellow.

Iago. What are you here that cry so grievously?

Cas. Iago! O, I am spoiled, undone by villains!

Give me some help.

Iago. O me, lieutenant! what villains have done this?

Cas. I think that one of them is hereabout,

And cannot make away.

Iago. O treacherous villains!—

What are you there? come in, and give some help.

[*To* LODOVICO and GRATIANO.]

Rod. O, help me here!

Cas. That's one of them.

Iago. O murderous slave! O villain!

[*IAGO stabs RODERIGO.*]

Rod. O damned Iago! O inhuman dog!

O! O! O!

Iago. Kill men i' the dark!—Where be these bloody thieves?

How silent is this town!—Ho! murder! murder!

What may you be? are you of good, or evil?

Lod. As you shall prove us, praise us.

Iago. Seignior Lodovico!

Lod. He, sir.

Iago. I cry you mercy; here's Cassio hurt

By villains.

Gra. Cassio?

Iago. How is it, brother?

Cas. My leg is cut in two.

Iago. Marry, Heaven forbid!—

Light, gentlemen; I'll bind it with my shirt.

Enter BIANCA.

Bian. What is the matter, ho? who is't that cried?

Iago. Who is't that cried?

Bian. O my dear Cassio! my sweet Cassio!
O Cassio! Cassio! Cassio!

Iago. O notable strumpet!—Cassio, may you suspect
Who they should be, that have thus mangled you?

Cas. No.

Gra. I am sorry to find you thus. I have been to
seek you.

Iago. Lend me a garter.¹ So.—O, for a chair,
To bear him easily hence!

Bian. Alas, he faints:—O Cassio! Cassio!
Cassio!

Iago. Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash
To be a party in this injury.²

Patience awhile, good Cassio.—Come, come;
Lend me a light.—Know we this face, or no?

Alas! my friend, and my dear countryman,³
Roderigo? No:—Yes, sure; O heaven! Roderigo.

Gra. What, of Venice?

Iago. Even he, sir; did you know him?

Gra.

Know him? ay.

Iago. Seignior Gratiano? I cry you gentle pardon;
These bloody accidents must excuse my manners,
That so neglected you.

Gra. I am glad to see you.

Iago. How do you, Cassio?—O, a chair, a chair!

Gra. Roderigo!

Iago. He, he, 'tis he.—O, that's well said;—the
chair.— [A chair brought in.

Some good man bear him carefully from hence;
I'll fetch the general's surgeon.—For you, mistress,

[To BIANCA.

Save you your labor. He that lies slain here, Cassio,
Was my dear friend. What malice was between
you?

Cas. None in the world; nor do I know the man.

¹ This speech is not in the first quarto.

² Thus the folio. The quarto 1622 reads, *to bear a part in this*.

³ This passage incontestably proves that Iago was meant for a
Venetian.

Iago. Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio dressed.—

Come, mistress, you must tell us another tale.—²

Emilia, run you to the citadel,

And tell my lord and lady what has happened.—

Will you go on, I pray?—This is the night, [Aside.

That either makes me, or foredoes¹ me quite.

[Exeunt.

SCENE II. *A Bedchamber: DESDEMONA in bed asleep. A light burning.*

Enter OTHELLO.

Oth. It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!³—
It is the cause.—Yet I'll not shed her blood,
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth as monumental alabaster.

[Takes off his sword.

Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.

Put out the light, and then—Put out the light!³

If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,

I can again thy former light restore,

Should I repent me;—but once put out thine,⁴

¹ To *foredo* is to *undo*, to *ruin*, to *destroy*.

² Othello, full of horror at the cruel action which he is about to perpetrate, seems at this instant to be seeking his justification, from representing to himself *the cause*, i. e. the greatness of the provocation he had received.

³ The old copy gives this line thus:—

“Put out the light, and then put out the light.”

The present regulation of the passage, by which so much beauty and spirit is added to it, was proposed by Mr. Upton, but it is to be found in Ayres's *Life of Pope*; it may, therefore, have originated with Warburton, who thus explains it:—“The meaning is, I will put out the light, and then proceed to the execution of my purpose. But the expression of *putting out the light* bringing to mind the effects of the extinction of the light of life, he breaks short, and questions himself about the effects of this metaphorical extinction, introduced by a repetition of his first words, as much as to say,—But hold, let me first weigh the reflection which this expression naturally excites.”

⁴ Thus the quarto. The folio reads, put out *thy light*. Steevens adopted the present reading for the sake of the measure, and to avoid the useless repetition of the word *light*.

Oth. Think on thy sins.

Des. They are loves I bear to you.

Oth. Ay, and for that thou diest.

Des. That death's unnatural, that kills for loving.—

Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip?
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame.
These are portents; but yet, I hope, I hope
They do not point on me.

Oth. Peace, and be still!

Des. I will so. What's the matter?

Oth. That handkerchief, which I so loved, and gave thee,

Thou gav'st to Cassio.

Des. No, by my life and soul;
Send for the man, and ask him.

Oth. Sweet soul, take heed,
Take heed of perjury; thou'rt on thy death-bed.

Des. Ay, but not yet to die.

Oth. Yes, presently.

Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin;
For to deny each article with oath,
Cannot remove, nor choke the strong conception,
That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.

Des. Then, Lord have mercy on me!

Oth. I say, amen.

Des. And have you mercy too! I never did
Offend you in my life; never loved Cassio,
But with such general warranty of Heaven
As I might love. I never gave him token.

Oth. By Heaven, I saw my handkerchief in his hand.
O perjured woman! thou dost stone my heart,
And mak'st me call, what I intend to do,
A murder, which I thought a sacrifice:¹
I saw the handkerchief.

¹ "This line is difficult. '*Thou hast hardened my heart, and makest me kill thee with the rage of a murderer, when I thought to have sacrificed thee to justice with the calmness of a priest striking a victim.*' I am glad that I have ended this dreadful scene; it is not to be endured."—*Johnson*.

Emil. [*Within.*] What, ho! my lord, my lord!

Oth. Who's there?

Emil. [*Within.*] O good my lord, I would speak a word with you.

Oth. Yes;—'tis Emilia;—by and by.—She's dead. 'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death.

The noise was high.—Ha! no more moving?

Still as the grave. Shall she come in? Were't good?

I think she stirs again.—No.—What's the best?

If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife.

My wife! my wife! what wife?—I have no wife.

O, insupportable! O, heavy hour!

Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse

Of sun and moon; and that the affrighted globe

Should yawn at alteration.

Emil. [*Within.*] I do beseech you I may speak with you,

O good my lord!

Oth. I had forgot thee. O, come in, Emilia.—

Soft,—by and by.—Let me the curtains draw.—

Where art thou? What's the matter with thee now?

[*Unlocks the door.*]

Enter EMILIA.

Emil. O good my lord, yonder's foul murder done.

Oth. What? now?

Emil. But now, my lord!

Oth. It is the very error of the moon:

She comes more near the earth than she was wont;

And makes men mad.

Emil. Cassio, my lord, has killed a young Venetian, Called—Roderigo.

Oth. Roderigo killed!

And Cassio killed?

Emil. No, Cassio is not killed.

that, when Othello says, "So, so," he renews his attempt to smother her.—Steevens thinks it is here intended that he should stab her.

Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I'd not have sold her for it.

Emil. My husband?

Oth. Ay, 'twas he that told me first;¹
An honest man he is, and hates the slime
That sticks on filthy deeds.

Emil. My husband?

Oth. What needs this iterance,² woman? I say, thy
husband!—

Emil. O mistress, villany hath made mocks with
love!³—

My husband say that she was false?

Oth. He, woman.

I say, thy husband. Dost understand the word?

My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.

Emil. If he say so, may his pernicious soul
Rot half a grain a day! he lies to the heart;
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

Oth. Ha!

Emil. Do thy worst.

This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven,
Than thou wast worthy her.

Oth. Peace, you were best.

Emil. Thou hast not half the power to do me harm,
As I have to be hurt. O gull! O dolt!
As ignorant as dirt! thou hast done a deed,—
I care not for thy sword; I'll make thee known,
Though I lost twenty lives.—Help! help, ho! help!
The Moor has killed my mistress. Murder! murder!

Enter MONTANO, GRATIANO, *and* IAGO.

Mon. What is the matter?—How now, general?

Emil. O, are you come, Iago? You have done well,
That men must lay their murders on your neck.

¹ The folio reads, that told me *on her* first.

² The quarto reads *iteration*. The two next speeches are omitted in that copy.

³ Villany hath taken advantage to *play upon* the weakness of a violent passion.

Oth. O, she was foul!—[*Rising.*
I scarce did know you, uncle. There lies your niece,
Whose breath, indeed, these hands have newly stopped.
I know this act shows horrible and grim.

Gra. Poor Desdemona! I am glad thy father's dead;
Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief
Shore his old thread in twain. Did he live now,
This sight would make him do a desperate turn,
Yea, curse his better angel from his side,
And fall to reprobation.¹

Oth. 'Tis pitiful: but yet Iago knows
That she with Cassio hath the act of shame
A thousand times committed.² Cassio confessed it;
And she did gratify his amorous works
With that recognizance and pledge of love
Which I first gave her. I saw it in his hand;
It was a handkerchief, an antique token
My father gave my mother.

Emil. O heaven! O heavenly powers!

Iago. Come, hold your peace.

Emil. 'Twill out, 'twill out;—I hold my peace,
sir? no;

No, I will speak as liberal³ as the air;
Let Heaven, and men, and devils, let them all,
All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

Iago. Be wise, and get you home.

Emil. I will not.

[*IAGO offers to stab his wife.*

Gra. Fie!

Your sword upon a woman?

Emil. O thou dull Moor! that handkerchief thou
speak'st of,
I found by fortune, and did give my husband;

¹ The first and the second folio both read *reprobance*.

² Dr. Johnson thinks that this and other passages in the play seem to suppose a longer space comprised in the action of this play than the scene includes.

³ The folio reads—

“I'll be in speaking liberal as the north;”

the quarto 1622 “liberal as the air.” The text is formed out of the two copies. *Liberal* here means *free*.

For often, with a solemn earnestness,
(More than, indeed, belonged to such a trifle,)
He begged of me to steal it.

Iago. Villanous whore!

Emil. She give it Cassio! no, alas; I found it,
And I did give't my husband.

Iago. Filth, thou liest.

Emil. By Heaven, I do not; I do not, gentlemen;
O murderous coxcomb! what should such a fool
Do with so good a wife?

[*IAGO stabs EMILIA, then runs out.*]

Oth. Are there no stones in heaven,

But what serve for the thunder?¹—Precious villain!

Gra. The woman falls; sure, he has killed his wife.

Emil. Ay, ay; O, lay me by my mistress' side!

Gra. He's gone, but his wife's killed.

Mon. 'Tis a notorious villain. Take you this
weapon,

Which I have here recovered from the Moor.

Come, guard the door without; let him not pass,

But kill him rather. I'll after that same villain,

For 'tis a damned slave.

[*Exeunt MONTANO and GRATIANO.*]

Oth. I am not valiant, neither,

But every puny whipster gets my sword.—

But why should honor outlive honesty?

Let it go all.

Emil. What did thy song bode, lady?

Hark, canst thou hear me? I will play the swan,

And die in music:—*Willow, willow, willow.*—

Moor, she was chaste; she loved thee, cruel Moor;

So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true;

So speaking as I think, I die,—I die.

[*Dies.*—

Oth. I have another weapon in this chamber;

It is a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper;²

O, here it is.—Uncle, I must come forth.

¹ The meaning appears to be:—"Has not heaven one supernumerary bolt, to hurl directly at the head of this atrocious villain?"

² The particular name of the ice-brook may be determined from several passages in Martial. (See lib. i. ep. 50, lib. iv. ep. 55.) It was probably

Gra. [*Within.*] If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear ;

Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.

Oth. Look in upon me, then, and speak with me,
Or, naked as I am, I will assault thee.

Re-enter GRATIANO.

Gra. What is the matter ?

Oth. Behold ! I have a weapon ;

A better never did itself sustain

Upon a soldier's thigh. I have seen the day,

That, with this little arm, and this good sword,

I have made my way through more impediments

Than twenty times your stop.—But, O, vain boast !

Who can control his fate ? 'tis not so now.—

Be not afraid, though you do see me weaponed ;

Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,

And very seamark of my utmost sail.

Do you go back dismayed ? 'Tis a lost fear ;

Man but a rush against Othello's breast,

And he retires ; where should Othello go ?—

Now, how dost thou look now ? O ill-starred wench !¹

Pale as thy smock ! when we shall meet at compt,

This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,

And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl ?

Even like thy chastity.—

O, cursed, cursed slave !—Whip me, ye devils,

From the possession of this heavenly sight !

Blow me about in winds ! roast me in sulphur !

Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire !—

O Desdemona ! Desdemona ! dead ?

Dead ? O ! O ! O !

the brook or rivulet called *Salo* (now *Xalon*), near *Bilbilis* in *Celtiberia*. In this the Spaniards plunged all their swords and other weapons while hot from the forge ; and to the icy quality of the waters they were supposed to be indebted for their stubborn temper.

¹ This and the six preceding lines are omitted in the first quarto. *Wench* originally signified only a *girl* or *young woman*.

The death of Cassio to be undertook
By Roderigo.

Oth. O villain!

Cas. Most heathenish, and most gross!

Lod. Now, here's another discontented paper,
Found in his pocket too; and this, it seems,
Roderigo meant to have sent this damned villain;
But that, belike, Iago, in the interim,¹
Came in and satisfied him.

Oth. O, the pernicious caitiff!—
How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief
That was my wife's?

Cas. I found it in my chamber:
And he himself confessed, but even now,
That there he dropped it, for a special purpose,
Which wrought to his desire.

Oth. O fool! fool! fool!

Cas. There is, besides, in Roderigo's letter,—
How he upbraids Iago, that he made him
Brave me upon the watch; whereon it came
That I was cast. And even but now he spake,
After long seeming dead,—Iago hurt him,
Iago set him on.

Lod. You must forsake this room, and go with us;
Your power and your command is taken off,
And Cassio rules in Cyprus. For this slave,—
If there be any cunning cruelty,
That can torment him much, and hold him long,
It shall be his. You shall close prisoner rest,
Till that the nature of your fault be known
To the Venetian state.—Come, bring him away.

Oth. Soft you; a word or two, before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know it;
No more of that.—I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am;² nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice. Then must you speak

¹ The first quarto reads, "in the nick."

² Thus the folio. The quarto reads, "Speak of them as they are."

Of one, that loved not wisely, but too well ;
 Of one, not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
 Perplexed in the extreme ; of one, whose hand,
 Like the base Júdean,¹ threw a pearl away,
 Richer than all his tribe ; of one, whose subdued eyes,
 Albeit unused to the melting mood,
 Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
 Their medicinal gum. Set you down this ;
 And say, besides,—that in Aleppo once,
 Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk²
 Beat a Venetian, and traduced the state,
 I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
 And smote him—thus. [Stabs himself.]

Lod. O bloody period !

Gra. All, that's spoke, is marred.

Oth. I kissed thee, ere I killed thee.—No way but
 this, [Falling upon DESDEMONA.]
 Killing myself, to die upon a kiss. [Dies.]

Cas. This did I fear, but thought he had no
 weapon ;

For he was great of heart.

Lod. O Spartan dog,³
 More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea !
 Look on the tragic loading of this bed ; [To IAGO.]
 This is thy work : the object poisons sight :—
 Let it be hid. Gratiano, keep the house,
 And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,
 For they succeed to you.—To you, lord governor,
 Remains the censure⁴ of this hellish villain ;

¹ The quarto 1622 reads *Indian*. The folio has *Judean*. Warburton, Theobald, and Dr. Farmer, think that the allusion is to Herod, who in a fit of blind jealousy threw away such a *jewel* in his wife Mariamne. Steevens admits the reading *Judean*, but thinks the allusion is not to the story of Herod, but to that of a Jew, who, not being able to find a purchaser for a very large pearl at an immoderate price, publicly threw it into the sea at Venice.

² It is said that it was immediate death for a Christian to strike a Turk in Aleppo.

³ The dogs of Spartan race were reckoned among those of the most fierce and savage kind.

⁴ i. e. judgment, the sentence.

The time, the place, the torture,—O, enforce it !
Myself will straight aboard ; and, to the state,
This heavy act with heavy heart relate. [Exeunt.

THE beauties of this play impress themselves so strongly upon the attention of the reader, that they can draw no aid from critical illustration. The fiery openness of Othello, magnanimous, artless, and credulous, boundless in his confidence, ardent in his affection, inflexible in his resolution, and obdurate in his revenge ; the cool malignity of Iago, silent in his resentment, subtle in his designs, and studious at once of his interest and his vengeance ; the soft simplicity of Desdemona, confident of merit, and conscious of innocence, her artless perseverance in her suit, and her slowness to suspect that she can be suspected,—are such proofs of Shakespeare's skill in human nature, as, I suppose, it is vain to seek in any modern writer. The gradual progress which Iago makes in the Moor's conviction, and the circumstances which he employs to inflame him, are so artfully natural, that though it will, perhaps, not be said of him as he says of himself, that he is *a man not easily jealous*, yet we cannot but pity him, when at last we find him *perplexed in the extreme*.

There is always danger, lest wickedness, conjoined with abilities, should steal upon esteem, though it misses of approbation ; but the character of Iago is so conducted, that he is, from the first scene to the last, hated and despised.

Even the inferior characters of this play would be very conspicuous in any other piece, not only for their justness, but their strength. Cassio is brave, benevolent, and honest, ruined only by his want of stubbornness to resist an insidious invitation. Roderigo's suspicious credulity, and impatient submission to the cheats which he sees practised upon him, and which, by persuasion, he suffers to be repeated, exhibit a strong picture of a weak mind betrayed by unlawful desires to a false friend ; and the virtue of Emilia is such as we often find, worn loosely, but not cast off, easy to commit small crimes, but quickened and alarmed at atrocious villanies.

The scenes from the beginning to the end are busy, varied by happy interchanges, and regularly promoting the progression of the story ; and the narrative in the end, though it tells but what is known already, yet is necessary to produce the death of Othello.

Had the scene opened in Cyprus, and the preceding incidents been occasionally related, there had been little wanting to a drama of the most exact and scrupulous regularity.

JOHNSON.

THE END.







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